

EDITED BY
STEPHANIE WYNNE-JONES AND
ADRIA LAVIOLETTE

ROUTLEDGE

THE SWAHILI WORLD

VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

THE SWAHILI WORLD

The Swahili World presents the fascinating story of a major world civilisation, exploring the archaeology, history, linguistics and anthropology of the Indian Ocean coast of Africa. It covers a 1,500-year sweep of history, from the first settlement of the coast to the complex urban tradition found there today. Swahili towns contain monumental palaces, tombs and mosques, set among more humble houses; they were home to fishers, farmers, traders and specialists of many kinds. The towns have been Muslim since perhaps the eighth century CE, participating in international networks connecting people around the Indian Ocean rim and beyond. Successive colonial regimes have helped shape modern Swahili society, which has incorporated such influences into the region's long-standing cosmopolitan tradition.

This is the first volume to explore the Swahili in chronological perspective. Each chapter offers a unique wealth of detail on an aspect of the region's past, written by the leading scholars on the subject. The result is a book that allows both specialist and non-specialist readers to explore the diversity of the Swahili tradition, how Swahili society has changed over time, as well as how our understandings of the region have shifted since Swahili studies first began.

Scholars of the African continent will find the most nuanced and detailed consideration of Swahili culture, language and history ever produced. For readers unfamiliar with the region or the people involved, the chapters here provide an ideal introduction to a new and wonderful geography, at the interface of Africa and the Indian Ocean world, and among a people whose culture remains one of Africa's most distinctive achievements.

Stephanie Wynne-Jones is currently *Pro Futura Scientia* Fellow at the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study, affiliated with Uppsala University. She has been Lecturer in Archaeology at the University of York since 2011 and is a core group member of the Centre for Network Evolutions at Aarhus University (DNRF119). She has conducted archaeological research on the Swahili coast since 2000, in Kenya, Tanzania and on the Zanzibar Archipelago.

Adria LaViolette is Associate Professor of Anthropology and Archaeology at the

University of Virginia. Her interest in the Swahili coast began in 1987 while teaching at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Since then she has conducted archaeological research on the Tanzanian mainland coast and on Pemba and Zanzibar islands. She has been Editor-in-Chief of *African Archaeological Review* since 2009.

THE ROUTLEDGE WORLDS

THE CRUSADER WORLD

Edited by Adrian Boas

THE BUDDHIST WORLD

Edited by John Powers

THE MODERNIST WORLD

Edited by Allana Lindgren and Stephen Ross

THE ATLANTIC WORLD

Edited by D'Maris Coffman, Adrian Leonard, and William O'Reilly

THE FIN-DE-SIÈCLE WORLD

Edited by Michael Saler

THE VICTORIAN WORLD

Edited by Martin Hewitt

THE GOTHIC WORLD

Edited by Glennis Byron and Dale Townshend

THE ELIZABETHAN WORLD

Edited by Susan Doran and Norman Jones

Forthcoming:

THE SHAKESPEAREAN WORLD

Edited by Jill L. Levenson and Robert Ormsby

THE WORLD OF INDIGENOUS NORTH AMERICA

Edited by Robert Warrior

THE WORLD OF THE REVOLUTIONARY AMERICAN REPUBLIC

Edited by Andrew Shankman

THE WORLD OF COLONIAL AMERICA

Edited by Ignacio Gallup-Diaz

THE SWAHILI WORLD

Edited by Stephanie Wynne-Jones and Adria LaViolette

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN WORLD, 2ND EDITION

Edited by Philip F. Esler

THE SWAHILI WORLD

*Edited by Stephanie Wynne-Jones and
Adria LaViolette*

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2018
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2018 selection and editorial matter, Stephanie Wynne-Jones and Adria LaViolette; individual chapters, the contributors

The right of Stephanie Wynne-Jones and Adria LaViolette to be identified as the authors of the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

A catalog record has been requested for this book

ISBN: 978-1-138-91346-2 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-315-69145-9 (ebk)

Typeset in Bembo
by Swales & Willis, Exeter, Devon, UK

CONTENTS

[List of figures](#)

[List of tables](#)

[List of maps](#)

[Contributors](#)

[Maps](#)

[Preface](#)

[Note on terminology](#)

[1 The Swahili world](#)

Adria LaViolette and Stephanie Wynne-Jones

PART I

Environment, background and Swahili historiography

Environment

[2 The eastern African coastal landscape](#)

Paul J. Lane and Colin P. Breen

[3 Resources of the ocean fringe and the archaeology of the medieval Swahili](#)

Edward Pollard

Studying the Swahili world

[4 The East African coast: researching its history and archaeology](#)

John Sutton

5 Defining the Swahili

Daren Ray

6 Decoding the genetic ancestry of the Swahili

Ryan L. Raaum, Sloan R. Williams, Chapurukha Kusimba, Janet M. Monge, Alan Morris and Mohamed Mchulla Mohamed

Contextualising the Swahili

7 Early connections

Nicole Boivin and Alison Crowther

8 The Swahili language and its early history

Martin Walsh

PART II

The Swahili age

Origins and early emporia

9 Swahili origins

Mark Horton and Felix Chami

10 Swahili oral traditions and chronicles

Anna Rita Coppola

11 Manda

Chapurukha M. Kusimba, Sloan R. Williams, Gilbert Oteyo, Janet M. Monge, Kong Cheong and Mohamed Mchulla Mohamed

12 Tumbe, Kimimba and Bandarikuu

Jeffrey Fleisher

13 Unguja Ukuu

Abdurahman Juma

14 Chibuene

Anneli Ekblom and Paul Sinclair

Swahili urbanism

15 Urbanism

Paul Sinclair

p.vii

16 Town and village

Jeffrey Fleisher

17 Mambrui and Malindi

Dashu Qin and Yu Ding

18 Shanga

Mark Horton

19 Gede

Matthew Pawlowicz

20 Mtwapa

Chapurukha M. Kusimba, Sloan R. Williams, Janet M. Monge, Mohamed Mchulla Mohamed, Rahul Oka, Gilbert Oteyo, Sibel B. Kusimba and Laure Dussubieux

21 Pemba Island, c. 1000–1500 CE

Adria LaViolette

22 Zanzibar

Tom Fitton

23 The history and archaeology of the Mafia Archipelago

Annalisa Christie

24 Kilwa Kisiwani and Songo Mnara

Stephanie Wynne-Jones

25 Mikindani and the southern coast

Matthew Pawlowicz

26 The Comoros and their early history

Henry T. Wright

[27 The Comoros 1000–1350 CE](#)

Henry T. Wright

[28 Mahilaka](#)

Chantal Radimilahy

Daily life

[29 The social composition of Swahili society](#)

Stephanie Wynne-Jones

p.viii

[30 Metals and metal-working along the Swahili coast](#)

Bertram B. B. Mapunda

[31 Craft and industry](#)

Adria LaViolette

[32 Animals and their uses in the Swahili world](#)

Eréndira M. Quintana Morales and Mary E. Prendergast

[33 Plant use and the creation of anthropogenic landscapes: coastal forestry and farming](#)

Sarah Walshaw and Jack Stoetzel

Trade and connectivity

[34 The progressive integration of eastern Africa into an Afro-Eurasian world-system, first–fifteenth centuries CE](#)

Philippe Beaujard

[35 Eastern Africa and the dhow trade](#)

Erik Gilbert

[36 Early inland entanglement in the Swahili world, c. 750–1550 CE](#)

Jonathan Walz

[37 Mosaics: rethinking African connections in coastal and hinterland Kenya](#)

Chapurukha M. Kusimba and Sibel B. Kusimba

[38 Global commerce, South Asia and the Swahili world](#)

Rahul Oka

[39 Links with China](#)

Bing Zhao and Dashu Qin

[Objects of exchange](#)

[40 Currencies of the Swahili world](#)

Karin Pallaver

[41 Glass beads and Indian Ocean trade](#)

Marilee Wood

[42 Quantitative evidence for early long-distance exchange in eastern Africa: the consumption volume of ceramic imports](#)

Seth M.N. Priestman

p.ix

[Swahili architecture](#)

[43 Islamic architecture of the Swahili coast](#)

Mark Horton

[44 Swahili houses](#)

Thomas Gensheimer

[PART III](#)

[The early modern and modern Swahili coast](#)

[Colonial domination and the rise of Zanzibar](#)

[45 Navigating the early modern world: Swahili polities and the continental–oceanic interface](#)

Jeremy Prestholdt

[46 Zanzibar old town](#)

Abdul Sheriff

[47 The Kilwa–Nyasa caravan route: the long-neglected trading corridor in southern Tanzania](#)

Thomas J. Biginagwa and Bertram B. B. Mapunda

[**The contemporary coast**](#)

[48 Islam in the Swahili world: connected authorities](#)

Anne K. Bang

[49 The legacy of slavery on the Swahili coast](#)

Lydia Wilson Marshall and Herman Kiriamu

[50 Life in Swahili villages](#)

Pat Caplan

[51 The modern life of Swahili stonetowns](#)

William Cunningham Bissell

[52 Identity and belonging on the contemporary Swahili coast: the case of Lamu](#)

Sarah Hillewaert

[53 Pate](#)

George Okello Abungu

p.x

[54 Mombasa: archaeology and history](#)

Herman Kiriamu

[55 The Swahili house: a historical ethnography of modernity](#)

Prita Meier

[56 The future of Swahili monuments](#)

George Okello Abungu, Mohamed Mchulla Mohamed, Abdallah Allausy and Abdallah Khamis Ali

[Index](#)

FIGURES

- 2.1 The distribution of major currents in the western Indian Ocean
- 2.2 Typical cross-sections of western Indian Ocean shorelines, illustrating their different zonation
- 2.3 Schematic section of relative position of different marine terraces on the Tanzania coast near Kaole
- 2.4 A typical association of Rufiji delta mangroves showing response to sea level change
- 2.5 Overview of the distribution of the main vegetation ecoregions along the Swahili coast and offshore islands
- 3.1 Fish-trap fences marked on Admiralty chart in Kiswere Harbour
- 3.2 Sites in the Bagamoyo area
- 3.3 Lime kiln at Ruvu Bay, southern Tanzania
- 3.4 Kilwa ria showing places mentioned in text
- 3.5 Medieval sites around Mida Creek
- 3.6 Mitimiru Causeway near Kisongo at northern entrance to Kiswere Harbour, Tanzania
- 4.1 Excavations at Kilwa Kisiwani, directed by Chittick
- 4.2 Excavations at Manda, directed by Chittick
- 5.1 Portraits of (a) Bwana Heri bin Juma of Saadani, Tanzania; (b) Swahili women of Mombasa, c. 1846–48; (c) Arab and Swahili men of Zanzibar, c. 1846–8; and (d) a Swahili family, c. 1846–8
- 6.1 Y chromosome markers genotyped for the modern Swahili sample
- 6.2 MDS visualisation of mtDNA genetic distance across the full comparative sample set (k = 3, stress = 0.078)
- 6.3 MtDNA genetic distance from the Swahili sample in the geographic context
- 6.4 MDS visualisation of Y chromosome genetic distance for (A) African haplogroups (k = 3, stress = 0.091) and (B) non-African haplogroups (k = 2, stress

- [6.5 Y chromosome genetic distance in the geographic context from \(A\) the North Coast subset of the Swahili for African haplogroups, \(B\) the South Coast subset for African haplogroups, and \(C\) the total Swahili sample for non-African haplogroups](#)
- [8.1 Genetic classification of Sabaki languages](#)
- [8.2 Genetic classification of Swahili dialects](#)
- [9.1 Early Tana Tradition ceramics from Dakawa, Tanzania](#)
- [11.1 Site map of Manda showing visible architecture and 2012 trench locations](#)
- [12.1 Early Tana Tradition ceramics from Tumbe](#)
- [12.2 Copper ring with incised design similar to Tana Tradition ceramics](#)
- [13.1 Local pottery, deep S-shaped vessels](#)
- [13.2 Local pottery, bowls](#)
- [13.3 Imported glass vessel with loop decoration, perhaps a bell beaker, dark green, TH 3.5 mm](#)
- [13.4 Imported glass beads](#)
- [14.1 A comparison of resource utilisation over time based on the bone assemblage from early and late occupation phases at Chibuene](#)
- [14.2 Detailed excavation map of the main part of the Chibuene site with locations of test pits and trenches excavated from 1977–1999](#)
- [14.3 Above: glass fragments from the early occupation phase of Chibuene, showing evidence of glass-working \(S131a–c\). Below: Zhizo-type beads from the early occupation phase of Chibuene](#)
- [17.1 \(a\) Map of the distribution of excavation sectors at Mambrui; \(b\) Map of the distribution of excavation sectors, Malindi Old Town](#)
- [17.2 \(a\) Ming Yongle imperial kiln blue-and-white porcelain; \(b\) ‘Yongle Tong Bao’ copper coin](#)
- [18.1 Mosque sequence revealed through excavation at Shanga](#)
- [18.2 Carved *Porites* from Shanga Friday mosque](#)
- [19.1 Plan of Gede, showing shape of enclosure walls to northeast, suggesting possible earlier enclosure](#)
- [19.2 The Palace, Kirkman’s Friday Mosque, and tombs](#)
- [20.1 Map of Mtwapa](#)
- [21.1 View of pillar tomb and graves, Ras Mkumbuu](#)

- [23.1 Map of Mafia showing sites excavated](#)
- [24.1 Map of the Kilwa Archipelago, showing sites mentioned in text](#)
- [24.2 The domed Great Mosque at Kilwa Kisiwani](#)
- [24.3 Map of the standing ruins at Songo Mnara](#)
- [25.1 View of contemporary Mikindani](#)
- [25.2 Local ceramics from the Early Iron Age and the early second millennium along the southern coast](#)
- [26.1 The Comoros in the eighth to tenth centuries; only major sites are shown](#)
- [27.1 Map of the Comoros showing major sites of the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries](#)
- [28.1 Map of Mahilaka](#)
- [30.1 Kohl stick from Chwaka](#)
- [30.2 Iron slag from Vumba Kuu, Kenya](#)
- [31.1 Grinder made on local Early Tana Tradition sherd, for rounding shell beads, from Tumbwe](#)
- p.xiii
- [31.2 Spindle whorls from Chwaka, made on sherds of imported pottery](#)
- [31.3 Plaster impression of woven mat or basket, Pujini \(Pemba Island\)](#)
- [32.1 Species richness \(number of taxa, NTAXA\) for tetrapod fauna reported from Swahili sites from EIA to medieval period, by region](#)
- [32.2 Frequency of domesticates among terrestrial and avian tetrapod remains at Swahili sites, excluding Comoros and Madagascar](#)
- [32.3 Relative abundance of caprines and cattle at Swahili sites, excluding Comoros and Madagascar](#)
- [32.4 Relative abundance of shark remains at Swahili sites](#)
- [33.1 Rainfall distribution in eastern Africa](#)
- [33.2 Graph showing different frequencies of plant types at a range of sites along the Swahili coast](#)
- [34.1 \(a\) Map of East Africa, first–sixth centuries; \(b\) Map of East Africa, seventh–tenth centuries](#)
- [34.2 \(a\) Map of East Africa, eleventh–fourteenth centuries; \(b\) Map of East Africa, fifteenth–sixteenth centuries](#)
- [35.1 Left: line drawing of *ganja/bagala* from log book of a Salem ship \(1840s\). Right: photograph c. 1890 of *mtepe* beached in Zanzibar](#)

- 36.1 Map of Mombo (Survey Area 4) Tanzania, paired with Google Earth image of the Lower Mkomazi Basin
- 36.2 Ceramics indicative of coast–interior continuities or links
- 36.3 Beads indicative of coast-interior ties excavated from sites in interior north-eastern, Tanzania: (a) beads of marine shell and giant landsnail (*Achatina* spp.) shell (c. 700–1350); (b) beads of wound glass (c. thirteenth to fifteenth centuries)
- 38.1 Maps showing trading complexes 300 bce–1800 CE
- 38.2a Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal Empires and the Imperial Détente
- 38.2b Provenience analysis of glazed wares in Mtwapa
- 38.2c Estimates of elephants killed and humans trafficked 1500–1900 CE
- 38.2d Changes in production and elite households in Mtwapa, before and after 1600 CE
- 39.1 Chinese southern maritime façade with main ports and kiln sites in relation to eastern Africa
- 39.2 Distribution map of Changsha ware sherds in Arabia and Africa
- 39.3 (a) Incense burner sherds, green glazed stoneware from the Yue kiln site, late tenth–early eleventh century, excavated from Dembeni site, Comoros Islands; (b), bowl sherds, Ding-style whiteware with moulded pattern on inside, Northern kiln site, latter half of twelfth century–early thirteenth century, from the Sanje ya Kati, Kilwa-Masoko, Tanzania
- 39.4 Distribution map of *qingbai* ware sherds in Arabia and Africa
- 39.5 (a) Bottle sherds, copper red ware, Jingdezhen kiln site, latter half of fourteenth century, from Gede, Kenya; (b) dish sherds, green-glazed stoneware, Longquan kiln complex, early fifteenth century, Ungwana, Kenya
- 40.1 Kilwa-type copper coin, from excavations at Songo Mnara
- 40.2 The Mtambwe Mkuu hoard
- 40.3 Austrian Maria Theresia thaler, 1781
- 41.1 (a) M-Na-Al 1 beads from Unguja Ukuu
- 41.2 (a) Cobalt blue v-Na-Ca beads from Unguja Ukuu (some show evidence of being heat rounded on a flat surface); (b) Zhizo series cobalt blue v-Na-Ca beads from southern Africa (Chibuene, Mozambique)
- 41.3 (a) Ruby red coil-wound Chinese beads from Songo Mnara; (b) emerald green, ruby red, pale blue and yellow Chinese elliptical beads from Songo Mnara
- 42.1 Fragments of appliqué-decorated, turquoise-blue alkaline glazed ware jars manufactured in southern Iraq and exported widely across the Indian Ocean

- [42.2 Fragments of Changsha Ware \(CHANG\) manufactured in Hunan province in southern China and exported across the Indian Ocean region during the eighth to the tenth centuries](#)
- [42.3 Fragments of ‘Dusun’ vessels \(DUSUN\) manufactured in Fujian and neighbouring provinces in South China, widely exported across the Indian Ocean as transport storage containers between the eighth and the tenth centuries](#)
- [42.4 Figures showing the changing proportion of ceramic imports by count and weight, by excavation phase within the UU14 sequence at Unguja Ukuu](#)
- [43.1 Kizimkazi inscription](#)
- [43.2 Friday mosque, Tumbatu](#)
- [43.3 Chwaka mosque](#)
- [43.4 Mihrab of the mosque at Manda](#)
- [43.5 Pillar tomb at Dondo](#)
- [44.1 Excavated house block at Gede showing interlocking plans of individual houses](#)
- [44.2 Plan of the House of the Cowries showing arrangement of spaces characteristic of Swahili stone houses at Gede](#)
- [44.3 House entrance and sunken courtyard, typical of medieval stone houses at Gede, from House of the Double Court](#)
- [44.4 Alcove for storing drinking water in House of the Cistern, Gede](#)
- [44.5 Wall niches from inner room of a house, Ungwana](#)
- [44.6 Carved door in Lamu](#)
- [44.7 Innermost room \(*ndani*\) of Swahili house in Lamu with *zidaka* niches](#)
- [44.8 Earthen houses at Faza, Siyu Island, Kenya](#)
- [46.1 \(a\) Omani beyt; \(b\) Zanzibar door; \(c\) Lime burning near the Old Fort](#)
- [46.2 Malindi Minaret Mosque](#)
- [46.3 \(a\) House of Wonders; \(b\) Old Dispensary](#)
- [46.4 Ng’ambo with modern Michenzani flats in the background](#)
- [47.1 The Kilwa-Nyasa caravan trade route, and location of sites identified by this project](#)
- [47.2 Selection of imports and exports recovered from sites discussed: a variety of imported European glass beads; a variety of imported pottery \(some bearing maker’s marks\); two sides of bilingually \(Arabic and German\) inscribed coins; gum copal](#)
- [50.1 Map of Mafia Island](#)

- [50.2 Map of Kanga village, Mafia](#)
- [50.3 Kanga football team](#)
- [50.4 Women cultivating wet land, Kanga](#)
- [52.1 Sailing dhow and Shela mosque, Lamu Island](#)
- [52.2 Lamu *vidaka*, niches displaying paraphernalia](#)
- [52.3 The Lamu seafront](#)
- [53.1 Map of Pate, showing divisions mentioned in the text](#)
- [54.1 Fort Jesus, Mombasa](#)
- [55.1 *Zidaka* from ruined house in Pate, probably eighteenth century](#)
- [56.1 Photograph and elevation drawing of Ishakani Tombs E and F](#)

TABLES

- 1.1 Overview of the chronology of the Swahili coast
- 3.1 Mangrove species along the eastern African coast
- 5.1 Summary of identity categories with distribution
- 6.1 Comparative sample for mitochondrial DNA analysis with diversity and distance statistics
- 6.2 African Y chromosome comparative sample with diversity and distance statistics
- 6.3 Non-African Y chromosome comparative sample with diversity and distance statistics
- 6.4 Mitochondrial haplogroups in the contemporary Kenyan Swahili sample
- 6.5 Analysis of molecular variance (AMOVA) results in the Swahili sample
- 6.6 Mitochondrial haplogroups in the archaeological Swahili sample.
- 8.1 Main Swahili dialects as they are known today
- 19.1 Imported ceramic information from Koplin's trenches at Gede
- 23.1 Summary of surveys conducted in the Mafia Archipelago 1950–2015
- 23.2 Summary of excavations conducted in the Mafia Archipelago 1950–2015
- 28.1 Radiocarbon dates from Mahilaka
- 28.2 Phases of occupation at Mahilaka
- 32.1 Published faunal data from Swahili sites
- 33.1 Six vegetation zones used by grass-specific researchers of eastern Africa
- 33.2 Types of plants encountered in modern landscapes surrounding archaeological sites Songo Mnara and Mikindani Bay
- 37.1 Origins of products important in the domestic economy
- 37.2 Eastern African exports
- 37.3 Origins of valued items in the domestic and export economies
- 37.4 Foreign markets for trade items from the eastern African coast
- 37.5 Products exported to five different markets – Arabia, Persia, India, China and

Southeast Asia

41.1 Kilwa Kisiwani glass beads by period, showing totals of wound and drawn beads and selected size ranges

p.xvii

41.2 Archaeological sites with Chinese coil-wound beads

42.1 Coastal East African sites with quantified ceramic assemblages

42.2 Sherd count data from coastal settlements in eastern Africa showing proportions of local to imported ceramics by period

47.1 Archaeological materials unearthed at Kilwa Kivinje

47.2 Archaeological materials from Mang'ua

47.3 Archaeological materials unearthed at Kikole

MAPS

- 1 The Swahili coast
- 2 Lamu Archipelago
- 3 Zanzibar Archipelago

CONTRIBUTORS

George Okello Abungu, Okello Abungu Heritage Consultants.

Abdallah Allausy, Gede Museum, Kenya.

Abdallah Khamis Ali, Head of Antiquities, Zanzibar.

Anne K. Bang, Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion, University of Bergen.

Philippe Beaujard, Emeritus Research Director, French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS).

Thomas J. Biginagwa, Department of Archaeology, University of Dar es Salaam.

William Cunningham Bissell, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Lafayette College.

Nicole Boivin, Department of Archaeology, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Human History.

Colin P. Breen, School of Geography and Environmental Sciences, Ulster University.

Patricia Caplan, Emeritus Professor of Social Anthropology, Goldsmiths, University of London.

Felix A. Chami, Department of Archaeology, University of Dar es Salaam.

Kong Cheong, Department of Anthropology, American University.

Annalisa Christie, Sainsbury Research Unit for the Arts of Africa, Oceania & the Americas, University of East Anglia.

Anna Rita Coppola, independent researcher.

p.xx

Alison Crowther, School of Social Science, University of Queensland.

Yu Ding, School of History, Beijing Normal University.

Laure Dussubieux, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago.

Anneli Ekblom, Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University.

Thomas Fitton, Department of Archaeology, University of York.

Jeffrey Fleisher, Department of Anthropology, Rice University.

Thomas Gensheimer, Department of Architectural History, Savannah College of Art and Design.

Erik Gilbert, Department of History, Arkansas State University.

Sarah Hillewaert, Department of Anthropology, University of Toronto.

Mark Horton, Department of Archaeology, University of Bristol.

Abdurahman Juma, Muslim University of Morogoro.

Herman Kiriamu, Division of Research and Extension, Kisii University.

Chapurukha M. Kusimba, Department of Anthropology, American University.

Sibel B. Kusimba, Department of Anthropology, American University.

Paul J. Lane, Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University.

Adria LaViolette, Department of Anthropology, University of Virginia.

Bertram B. B. Mapunda, Department of Archaeology, University of Dar es Salaam.

Lydia Wilson Marshall, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, DePauw University.

Prita Meier, Centre for African Studies, University of Illinois.

Mohamed Mchulla Mohamed, National Museums of Kenya, Mombasa.

Janet Monge, Department of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania.

Alan Morris, Department of Human Biology, University of Cape Town.

Rahul Oka, Department of Anthropology, University of Notre Dame.

Gilbert Oteyo, National Museums of Kenya.

Karin Pallaver, Department of History and Cultures, University of Bologna.

p.xxi

Matthew Pawlowicz, Anthropology Program, School of World Studies, Virginia Commonwealth University.

Edward Pollard, British Institute in Eastern Africa, Nairobi, Kenya.

Mary E. Prendergast, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Saint Louis University in Madrid, Spain.

Jeremy Prestholdt, Department of History, University of California, San Diego.

Seth M. N. Priestman, Department of History Classics & Archaeology, University of Edinburgh.

Dashu Qin, Professor, School of Museology and Archaeology, Peking University.

Eréndira M. Quintana Morales, Department of Anthropology, Rice University.

Ryan L. Raaum, CUNY Lehman College and The Graduate Center and NYCEP.

Chantal Radimilahy, University Museum, Antananarivo, Madagascar.

Daren E. Ray, Department of History, Auburn University.

Abdul Sheriff, Emeritus Professor, Department of History, University of Dar es Salaam.

Paul Sinclair, Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University.

Jack Stoetzel, Rice University.

John E. G. Sutton, University of Oxford, formerly British Institute in Eastern Africa.

Martin Walsh, Global Research Advisor, Oxfam GB.

Sarah Walshaw, Departments of History and Archaeology, Simon Fraser University.

Jonathan Walz, Zanzibar Program, School for International Training.

Sloan R. Williams, University of Illinois at Chicago.

Marilee Wood, School of Geology, Archaeology and Environmental Studies, University of the Witwatersrand.

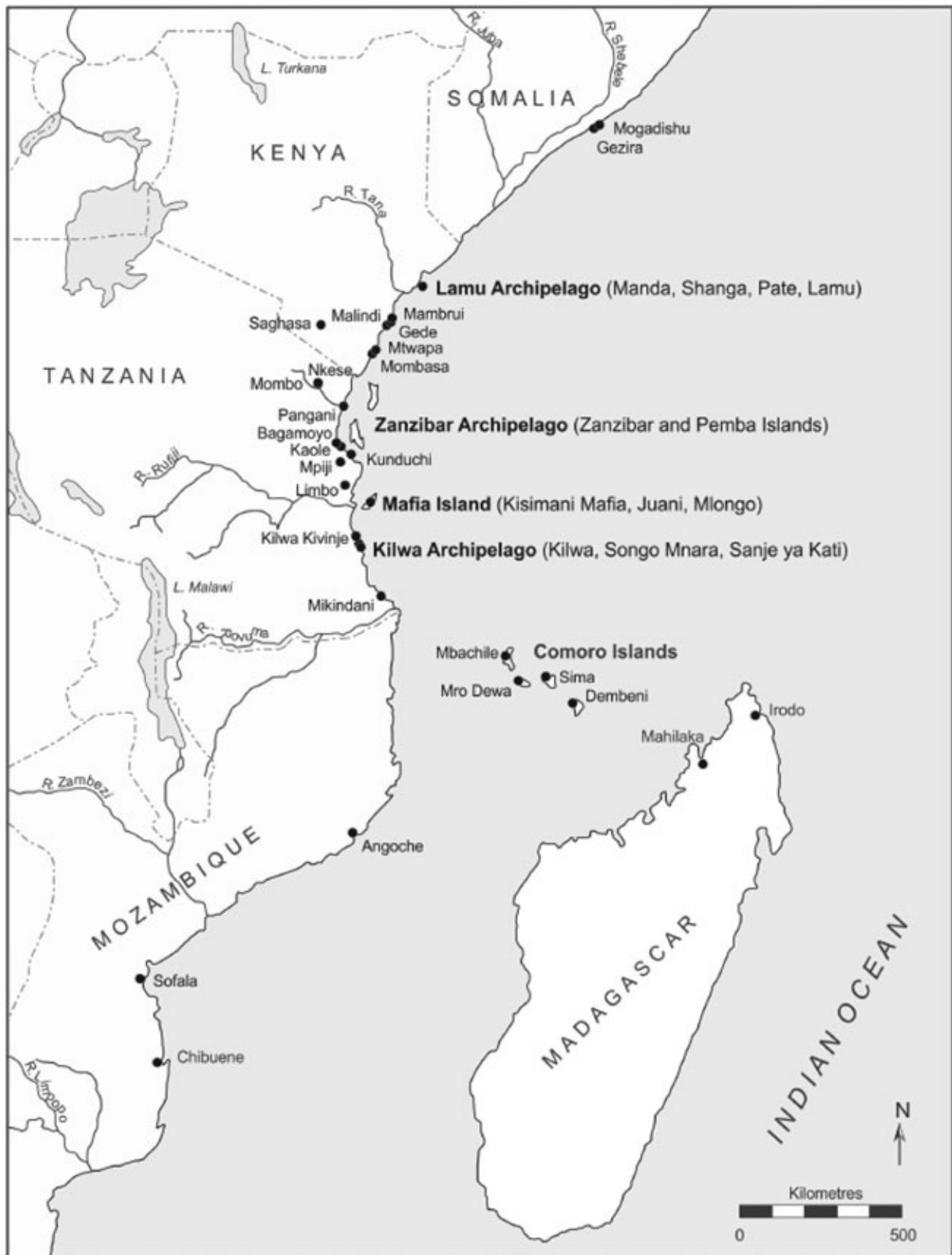
Henry T. Wright, Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan.

Stephanie Wynne-Jones, Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study, Uppsala and

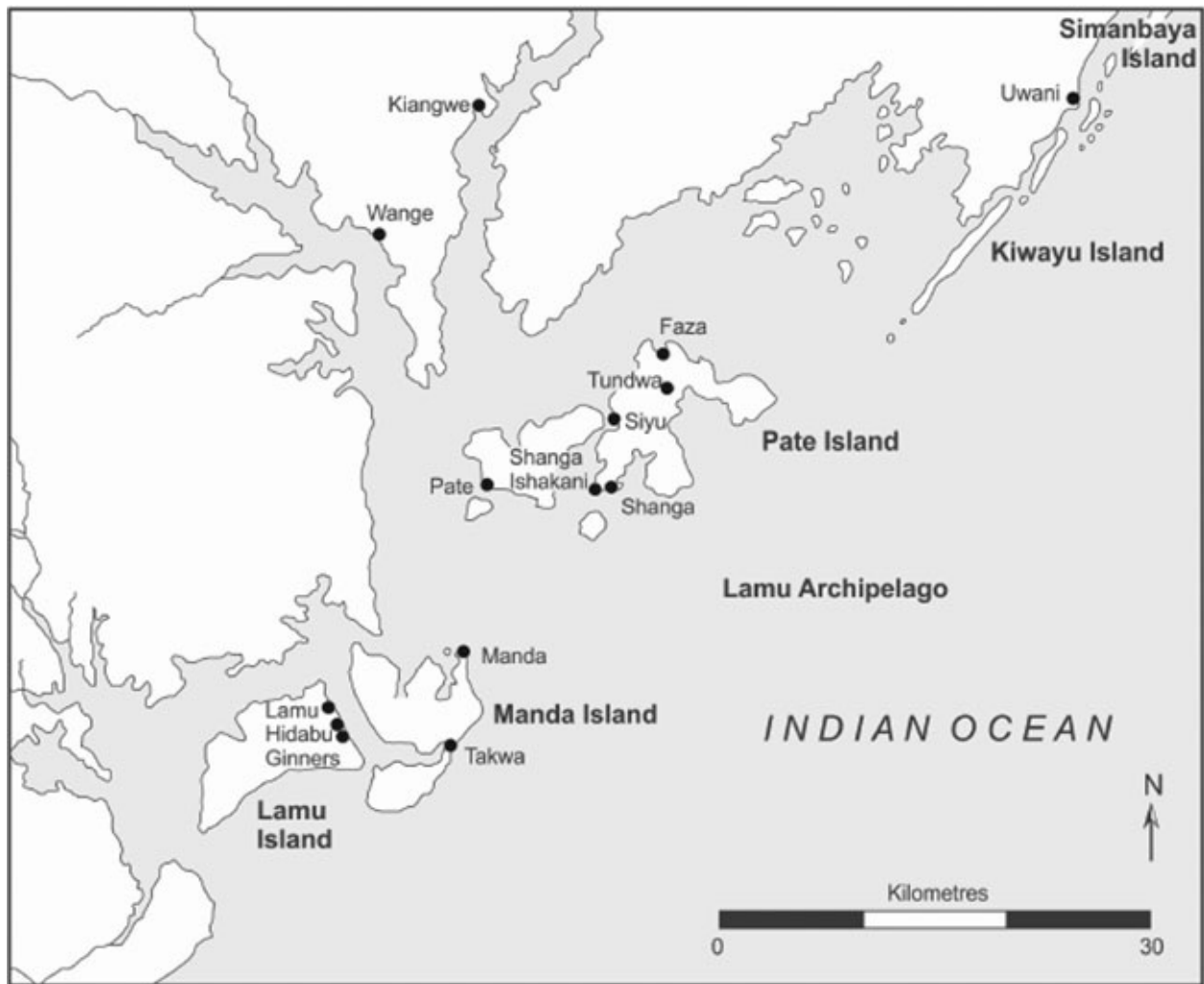
University of York.

Bing Zhao, Research Fellow, CNRS, Paris.

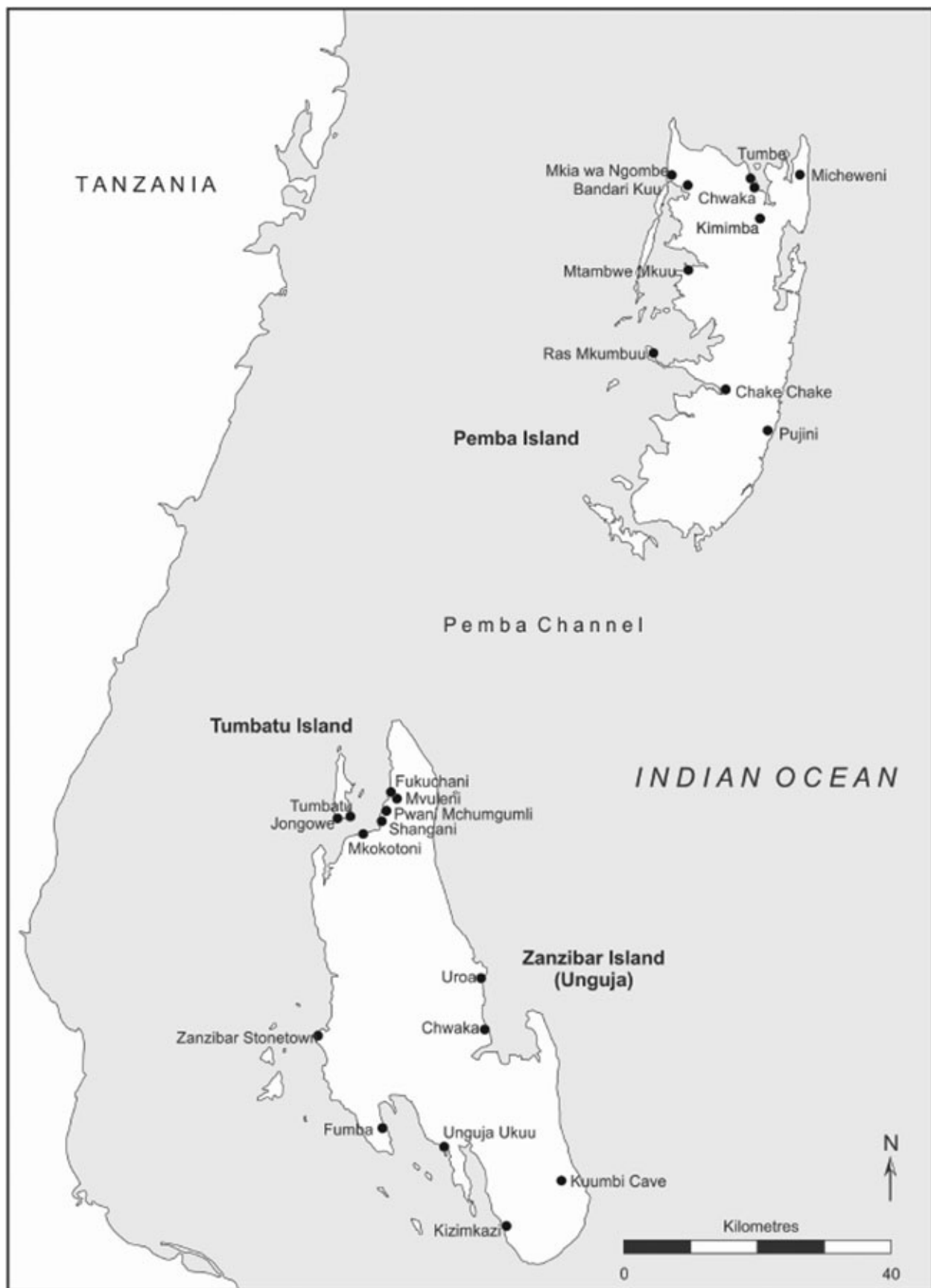
MAPS



Map 1 The Swahili coast



[*Map 2*](#) Lamu Archipelago



[Map 3](#) Zanzibar Archipelago

PREFACE

In 2015 we were invited by editors at Routledge to produce *The Swahili World*, an edited volume made up of chapters by a collection of experts in our field. It was with great pleasure and some nervousness that we took up the challenge. What it would contain was up to us. In keeping with others in Routledge's 'Worlds' series, we aimed for an emphasis on the deeper past, with most coverage from the sixth to the sixteenth centuries, what we have called the 'Swahili Age'. This would be the first such book in 'Worlds' about a sub-Saharan African topic, and we are excited that others are now in progress. Our focus was archaeology, but we invited a number of scholars from other disciplines, and who work in more recent centuries up to the present day. We are deeply grateful to the almost 60 energetic, generous and collaborative scholars who contributed to the volume that has grown out of this enormous effort. We have learned a tremendous amount from the contributing authors' work as we assembled *The Swahili World*, and we hope it proves to be a rich resource and pleasurable reading experience.

There are numerous people to thank for their direct assistance along the way. The Africanist scholars who reviewed our original proposal provided insightful comments that informed our editorial path. Of course the many chapter contributors – from Africa, Europe, Asia, and North America – have made the book possible. They respected our deadlines, conferred constructively with each other and with us, wrote across language barriers, bridged disagreements, responded to reviewers' comments and, most of all, shared their research and thoughts on the Swahili in ways that are compelling to 'insiders' and, we hope, to readers new to the coast. Each chapter was reviewed multiple times and we appreciate the effort and expertise that went into these careful reviews; some reviewers were among the book's contributors and many were not. We invited a number of people to contribute chapters who were unable to for different reasons, yet all went on to offer other kinds of help.

We thank the editors at Routledge for ongoing support and enthusiasm for this project. Mark Horton and Jeffrey Fleisher provided many instances of advice and input above and beyond their own multiple chapters. We thank Jim Brennan, Sarah Croucher and Thomas Spear for contributing to the historical overview in our introduction by providing unpublished materials and other support. We also thank Thomas Fitton and Jennifer

Tremblay Fitton for their invaluable technical support in the final stages of manuscript production.

p.xxvi

Our families saw a bit less of us over the course of many months and thus we particularly thank our husbands, Michael Monaghan and Jeffrey Hantman, for their kind – and many kinds of – understanding. We hope that this collective work inspires continued research in African archaeology, history, anthropology, linguistics and other disciplines. Finally, we thank our many Swahili and other interlocutors in eastern Africa. They are in cities, towns, and villages, in universities, antiquities departments, museums, archives, and in the field. Their intellectual, bureaucratic and logistical collaborations have made our work possible.

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

For the non-specialist reader (and perhaps even for those familiar with the region) a note on terminology is required. By incorporating different disciplines into the volume, we naturally incorporated different terminology for describing aspects of the coastal past. Yet it is within the archaeological contributions that most diversity occurs. These differences are linked to some slightly differing ways of exploring and understanding the past, so this was not something that could easily be standardised. We have chosen instead to leave in much of the diversity, with a short explanation to help the reader navigate meaning.

The last two millennia of the African past are commonly referred to within Africanist research as the ‘Iron Age’; this should not be confused with prehistoric periods in Europe. The use of the term relates strictly to the coming of iron technology, also linked to a sedentary way of life and the Bantu linguistic family (Phillipson 1977). The precise dates of the beginning of the ‘Early Iron Age’ (EIA) therefore differ in different parts of eastern Africa, covering the first half of the first millennium CE. Within this volume the term mainly appears as background, positioning the roots of the Swahili among iron-using Bantu populations. The ‘Late Iron Age’ is associated with a social shift to more hierarchical, nucleated societies, occurring from the ninth century onwards across the region. Yet recently, the term ‘Middle Iron Age’ has begun to be used for some of the societies who, from the seventh century onwards, settled the coastal region and founded sites such as Unguja Ukuu (Boivin and Crowther, Juma, Pollard, this volume). All of these categories are fairly fluid chronologically and, where possible, we have retained simply dates or reference to centuries. The ‘Iron Age’ categories, however, are more than just chronological periods; they also link to particular ways of life and have associations with certain cultural or ethnic groups. In contrast, the use of the term ‘medieval’, which also comes into eastern African coastal research (for example, Sutton, this volume), is an external category derived from the European medieval period. It remains useful here because it emphasises the connection of the coast with a broader world of interaction and its position as part of the interconnectivity that characterises the medieval period more generally.

Another form of terminology has been significant in eastern African research, particularly that completed by local scholars who have rejected the use of nomenclature

derived from outside the region. Some have made a forceful argument for the use of the term ‘iron-working’ instead of ‘iron age’, resulting in ‘Early Iron-Working’ or EIW (Chami 1992). To some extent this is directly interchangeable with EIA, but it is based on a technological transition, rather than a period of time. In this volume, use of the term ‘iron working’ is seen most emphatically in the chapter by Mapunda, who explores the use of metals on the coast. His categories – Early Iron-Working, Middle Iron-Working, and Late Iron-Working – are based on changes he identifies in modes of metallurgical production. They do not correlate with the iron ‘ages’; the ‘Middle Iron-Working’, for example, runs up to 1500 CE, recognising a technological tradition that endured until the arrival of European outsiders and mass-produced metal artefacts. This terminology, then, is part of a commitment to understanding technology on its own terms, rather than forcing changes in iron production into a series of social categories.

p.xxviii

One final note is on the issue of ceramic typology and terminology, an area perhaps most likely to lose the non-specialist. Discussion of locally made ceramics is central to how the archaeology of the coast has come to be known, the ways it is positioned within a regional matrix, and the lines that can be drawn connecting disparate sites and communities. Yet there is no complete consensus on terminology and, again, the words used reflect a particular approach taken by the researcher. This is most hotly debated for the ceramics known as Early Tana Tradition/Triangular Incised Ware, or ETT/TIW. Early Tana Tradition/Triangular Incised Ware refers to the dominant type of pottery found at archaeological sites on the coast over the first four centuries of rapid settlement by what we are calling the early Swahili. It also occurs inland, so it is not so much a marker of Swahili identity but, rather, one that indicates an interaction sphere in which coastal people were dominant numerically. The coherence of this ceramic grouping was first recognised by Horton (1984; although see also Phillipson 1979) who named it ‘Tana Tradition’ after the Tana River in Kenya. This reference to the hinterland was deliberate, drawing on the connections between Shanga, where he was working, and sites of the interior. When first this name was challenged by Felix Chami (1994) it was on political grounds, as he rejected the Kenyan origin that was, for him, implied by the name. In fact, researchers went on to identify earlier sites with similar ceramics across central Tanzania and Zanzibar (Fawcett and LaViolette 1990; Chami 1998; Juma 2004) so it seems he was right to question this. Chami instead used the term Triangular-Incised Ware (TIW) for a particular type of incised necked jar that was dominant in assemblages during those centuries. Each of these terms has advantages in terms of how we now understand the ceramics in the context of Swahili history: Tana does give the ceramics a northern focus, but Triangular Incised Ware focuses on a single decorative motif which is very common but not ubiquitous. Ultimately, TIW is thus limited to a single type of ceramic within the ‘Tradition’ and cannot fully replace the use of Tana Tradition. Triangular Incised Ware jars are equivalent to Type 1a jars in Horton’s typology, which also recognises multiple

forms of bowls and other types of jar, as part of the 'Early Tana Tradition'. His typology also allows for change over time in the 'Developed Tana' or 'Late Tana Tradition' ceramic types which characterize later centuries. In fact, as coastal ceramic types became more diverse in later centuries, the typology from Shanga may no longer capture the range of later ceramics well, but the notion of a tradition allows for various types within a corpus. Early Tana Tradition (ETT) is thus just one part of the longer trajectory of coastal ceramics (Wilding 1989) and TIW is just one part within it. Yet we have left authors to decide for themselves how to name these ceramics as, again, that choice is more than a simple substitution and reflects a range of opinions and approaches to the coastal past. As a final note in regard to the volume's photographs, all are by the author unless stated otherwise.

References

- Chami, F. A. 1992. 'Limbo: early iron-working in south-eastern Tanzania'. *Azania* 27: 45–52.
- Chami, F. A. 1994. *The Tanzanian Coast in the First Millennium ad.* Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis.
- p.xxix
- Chami, F. A. 1998. 'A review of Swahili archaeology'. *African Archaeological Review* 15 (3): 199–218.
- Fawcett, W. B. and LaViolette, A. 1990. 'Iron Age settlement around Mkiu, south-eastern Tanzania'. *Azania* 25: 19–25.
- Horton, M. C. 1984. 'The early settlement of the northern Swahili coast'. PhD diss., University of Cambridge.
- Juma, A. 2004. *Unguja Ukuu on Zanzibar: An Archaeological Study of Early Urbanism.* Uppsala: Studies in Global Archaeology 3.
- Phillipson, D. W. 1977. *The Later Prehistory of Eastern and Southern Africa.* New York: Africana Publishing Co.
- Phillipson, D. W. 1979. 'Some Iron Age sites in the lower Tana valley'. *Azania* 14: 155–60.
- Wilding, R. 1989. 'Coastal Bantu: WaSwahili'. In *Kenyan Pots and Potters*, edited by J. Barbour and S. Wandibba, 100–15. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

1

THE SWAHILI WORLD

Adria LaViolette and Stephanie Wynne-Jones

The Swahili world

Africa borders the Indian Ocean along its eastern coast, a region of beaches and cliffs fringed by coral reef and backed by a varied landscape, sometimes dry and inhospitable, often fertile and full of life. This coast and its offshore islands (Map 1, p. xxii) is home to the Swahili people, language and culture. Those elements overlap to a great extent, but each is the product of its own historical trajectory; this coast has been home for many centuries to the developments that created contemporary Swahili society. During the course of those centuries, the people of this coast developed a society of sophistication and complexity; their towns were known throughout the world from Europe to China, regions with which eastern African traders were in regular contact. Today Swahili history is relatively poorly known to a global audience, yet it is rightly recognised by scholars of the African past as the story of one of the continent's great civilisations.

This volume is an introduction to that civilisation, created from a diverse assembly of scholarship about the Swahili, centred in archaeology and complemented by history, linguistics and socio-cultural anthropology. Such a wealth of disciplinary input is perhaps unusual for the Routledge Worlds series, which has covered societies known primarily through either archaeology or history. For the Swahili, however, it is difficult to create a full picture from any one discipline, and the current state of knowledge about the coastal past has been created through conversation between many sources of data (for example, Nurse and Spear 1984; Horton and Middleton 2000). Here, we sought to represent Swahili civilisation without compressing temporal and spatial differences, to avoid minimising the clear diversity of experience represented over the course of its history ([Table 1.1](#)). In walking this zigzag line, what emerges – and this was our task – is a ‘world’: unique, striking and complicated. The ‘personality’ of the Swahili coast is conveyed in so many overlapping ways, ancient and modern: in people’s dress, Muslim faith, cuisine, language communities, origin stories, music, material culture and cosmopolitan urban and rural

landscapes. Yet even as Swahili became an identifiable ‘world’, it has always been a world in motion; it has been conservative and traditional, and equally additive and open. These transformations have contributed to making this such an enduring civilisation and are what we have tried to convey collectively in the chapters that follow.

For readers, scholarly or otherwise, who are new to the coast, the volume will provide access to the ancient Swahili, some views of modern Swahili life, and some connections binding them together. For those readers whose research already ties them to the coast, we hope we have provided a truly non-normative, three-dimensional and up-to-date – if inevitably incomplete – view of contemporary Swahili scholarship.

p.2

[*Table 1.1*](#) Overview of the chronology of the Swahili coast

0–600: Scattered Iron Age settlement in eastern Africa including coast; trade emporia.	1st century CE 4th century CE	<i>Periplus of the Erythraean Sea</i> mentions Rhapta. Ptolemy’s <i>Geography</i> mentions Azania, ‘Rhaption’, Menouthias, sewn boats.
600–1000: Village life expands on coast; mixed economy of farming and fishing; craft production; evidence of long-distance trade particularly with Persian Gulf.	750 916 975	First mosque at Shanga. Al Mas’udi describes ‘Qanbalu’. destruction layer at Shanga.
1000–1500: Swahili ‘stonetowns’ with Muslim population, trading across Indian Ocean world.	1066 1107 1220 1331 1413–15	Probable date of Mtambwe Mkuu coin hoard. Inscription on Kizimkazi mosque. Yaqut describes Mogadishu. Ibn Battuta describes Mogadishu, Mombasa, Kilwa. Zheng He’s voyage to eastern African coast in circuit of Indian Ocean.
1500–1698: Period of uneven Portuguese colonial domination; stonetowns continue.	1498	Vasco da Gama rounds Cape of Good Hope, travels up eastern African coast.
1698 onwards: Omani colonial domination, but also golden age of Swahili culture and religion, centred on Pate. Later British, German and Portuguese colonialism regionally; stonetowns continue in some regions.	1698 1830 1884/5	Omani siege of Portuguese at Fort Jesus. Omani colonisation of Zanzibar. Berlin Conference.
Independence and nationalism; stonetowns continue in reduced numbers.	1963 1961 1964 1975	Kenyan independence from Britain. Tanganyikan independence from Britain. Zanzibar Revolution against Oman; union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar. Mozambican independence from Portugal.

The myth of external origins and its legacy

Historical and archaeological work on the Swahili coast was inspired by a misapprehension, born of a more general orientalist vision that guided interaction with contemporary Swahili. Presented with the remains of a sophisticated Islamic civilisation of obvious antiquity, European colonial administrators and scholars assumed that the Swahili were Arab immigrants, brought to the coast by the opportunities of trade with the interior (Sutton, this volume). This provided an easy explanation for the clear Arab/Persian affinities of Swahili civilisation, the presence of Arabic words in the Swahili language and the ruins of mosques and palaces that dot the coast, which could be compared with those in the Islamic heartlands. It was also an explanation that found ready agreement among contemporary Swahili populations, who often traced their roots overseas; this was particularly true during the periods of Omani and later European colonialism, when Swahili identity was being actively negotiated for political advantage under a regime that favoured Arab over African ethnicity (Ray, this volume).

p.3

Contemporary scholarship has rightly rejected this paradigm, presenting an alternative vision of the Swahili coast as home to an African population, strongly affected by centuries of contact with the Indian Ocean world, and with other parts of the Dar al Islam, but indigenous in great proportion of its population and autochthonous in development. The evidence that underlies this shift in thinking is presented in several of the chapters of this volume, which relate crucial developments in historical linguistics that categorised the Swahili language as Bantu, albeit with many Arab loanwords that came into the language in the last few centuries (Walsh, this volume); reinterpretations of the oral traditions of the coast (Coppola, this volume); and the archaeology of early towns (Horton and Chami, this volume). Each began independently to confirm African roots for Swahili populations. There are now no serious scholars who suggest external origins or significant Arab or Persian colonisation as the starting point for coastal settlement.

Effects on contemporary scholarship

This story of external vs. indigenous origins is more than just a footnote in modern interpretations. The way that research developed on the coast has had significant effects on contemporary scholarship. One effect of the way that Swahili sites were singled out by early researchers is – quite simply – that there was *more* archaeological research completed in coastal regions than in locations inland. Colonial scholars were drawn by the exotic nature of Swahili towns, the apparently incongruous appearance of grand palaces and mosques in regions otherwise characterised by earthen architecture; this was a puzzle to be solved (Kirkman 1964; Chittick 1974, 1984). It was also easier to work on these sites, with obvious standing remains and imported goods that gave an important frame of reference

for understanding chronology and connection, in what was otherwise an almost complete absence of historical information. (Imported goods still play a crucial role in providing relative dates for coastal sites and, indeed, for sites inland; Priestman, this volume.)

From the 1980s onwards, scholarship was given further momentum by the desire to disprove the colonial thesis, with a wealth of studies focusing on ‘urban origins’ among indigenous populations (Sinclair and Juma 1992; Horton 1996). As part of this movement, scholars began to look to relationships between the coast and inland groups. Linguistic reconstruction showed a deep and ongoing coevolution of the Swahili language and those of the near hinterland, which belied the suggestion of enclaves of Arab immigrants on the coast (Nurse and Spear 1984). Historians began to grapple with the fluid nature of coastal identity and showed that it had long been defined in relation to other African groups of the hinterland near and far (Allen 1993; Willis 1993; Helm 2004). Archaeologists excavated sites of the African interior and produced a material record parallel to that found at coastal sites, positioning the archaeological culture known as Swahili within a much broader regional grouping (Abungu and Muturo 1993; Chami 1994; Håland and Msuya 1994/5). A prominent Tanzanian archaeologist, Felix Chami, suggested that these similarities were particularly pertinent for the first millennium CE and that, from the eleventh century onwards, coastal sites became gradually more distinct from their hinterlands; for him this was linked to the widespread adoption of Islam on the coast and subsequent tendency to look ‘outward’ to the Indian Ocean world (Chami 1994; also Pouwels 1987; Horton 1991; Wright 1993 on the shift to majority Islam). This suggestion has to some extent been subsumed by the broader conclusion of these studies, which is that the coastal culture that became Swahili developed from, and in conversation with, a larger eastern African region.

p.4

Recognizing diversity

This last point bears closer consideration, because enclosed within it is one of the key tensions that characterises Swahili scholarship today. Recognition of the Swahili as an African society was predicated on a set of assumptions that positioned coastal towns within a very broad region; similarities between inland and coastal sites meant that both were effectively considered part of the same society. The evidence was also developmental, based on common roots and, in particular, on the period between the sixth and tenth centuries. This vision has done much to shape understandings of Swahili society for the better, yet it has also sometimes made it more difficult to recognise diversity between mainland and coastal assemblages, or to discuss some of the unique characteristics of the coast.

As we discuss below, there is a broad shift between the sixth and tenth-century settlements and those of the eleventh century onwards. Although we might recognise sites

of the sixth century and after as part of the Swahili historical trajectory, it is only from the eleventh century that many of the characteristic features of coastal culture developed. By the thirteenth to fourteenth century, many coastal townscapes looked very different from those found further inland, although they still contained a majority of earthen architecture like their neighbouring villages. The towns were also quite different from each other, as is clear in the pages of this volume. Kilwa Kisiwani and Songo Mnara, with their grand monuments and elaborate structures (Wynne-Jones, this volume), were quite distinct from contemporary Chwaka on Pemba (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013; LaViolette, this volume), where inhabitants continued to live in wattle-and-daub structures despite their mastery of coral architecture, demonstrated in the construction of a domed mosque (Horton, *Islamic Architecture*, this volume). These townscapes were diverse places, probably containing diverse populations; the evidence for this is starting to emerge from aDNA studies, although these are still in their infancy (Raaum *et al.*, this volume). It can be difficult to capture this diversity, recognising the unique nature of Swahili society without attracting criticism for singling them out from their African neighbours. In fact, the DNA evidence joins that from many aspects of coastal material culture to demonstrate significant mobility between the coast and a very deep hinterland. The Swahili are a rich and complex African civilisation but, due to the history of research in this region and the long shadow of the external origins myth, it can be difficult to discuss the very aspects that make them so unique: their cosmopolitanism, diversity and outward-looking culture.

Moving beyond essentialisms

It can be equally difficult to point to change over time in terms of how the Swahili viewed themselves, something that is to some extent recoverable archaeologically. A recent paper, for example, argued that the Swahili had not always been a ‘maritime society’, suggesting instead that the orientation of this society towards the sea had occurred incrementally and in different ways (Fleisher *et al.* 2015). A general shift in the eleventh century was postulated, at which time changes in architecture, diet, religion and material culture suggested more active engagement with the maritime world. This is also the moment at which oral traditions suggest towns were ‘founded’ by immigrant rulers. The aim of the paper was to explore such change over time, in a society traditionally regarded as maritime by default. Yet this argument has been critiqued from two opposite sides, each with their roots in the debate over Swahili origins. First, it has been suggested that the article focuses too heavily on maritimism, ignoring the mainland connections of the Swahili. This explicitly harks back to the origins debate, equating maritimism with foreignness: ‘resuscitating the very question that postcolonial pioneers like Gervase Mathew, Peter Garlake, Thomas Wilson, Richard Wilding, and James Allen struggled to exorcise’ (Kusimba 2016: x). Elsewhere, critique has focused on the idea that the article ignores a longer tradition of maritime adaptation on the coast, although this is not claimed directly ancestral to the Swahili (Crowther *et al.* 2016). Each of these critiques reveals an

underlying assumption that coastal groups must *be* something or the other – if African, they cannot be maritime; if coastal, they must be part of a long-term developmental trajectory of uniquely maritime society. In fact, the more research occurs on the coast, the more we recognise that the Swahili were simultaneously African and engaged in foreign trade, they were both farmers and traders, they had a range of relationships with groups both near and far, across land and sea, and the recognition of these should be a fundamental part of studying the Swahili world.

p.5

It is for this reason that the current volume deliberately sets out to include archaeology from the deep hinterland (Kusimba and Kusimba, Walz, this volume). Even though the sites and people discussed were not ‘Swahili’, they are part of the Swahili world as well as central to their own. In addition, the researchers involved have explicitly framed their research on interior groups from the perspective of coastal archaeology and connections. The fact that we also include chapters on Indian (Oka, this volume) and Chinese (Zhao and Qin, this volume) connections does not devalue the interior relationships of the Swahili coast, but simply adds to the richness of the Swahili civilisation and their range of interactions. Nevertheless, the constant need for negotiation between exploring external and African connections exists, created by contemporary politics and research agendas and not obviously by the ancient Swahili themselves, who seem to have thrived in both contexts.

Naming the Swahili

One way that apparent differences of opinion have been created in Swahili scholarship is based on whom and what might be classed as Swahili. The history of this conversation is reviewed by Ray (this volume) and will not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that the name Swahili, applied to past populations, is always anachronistic. Even within the last two centuries the term has been hotly contested, desired and rejected by groups on the coast and elsewhere. In earlier periods we have no evidence it was used at all, and if it was it might have been only a name given by outsiders, referring to the people of the coast (the origin seems to be in the Arabic *sawahil*, meaning ‘coast’; Tolmacheva 1976). Middleton (1992: 27ff.) suggested that local understandings of identity might be more valid, such as the designations showing belonging to a town or corporate group within a town. Here there is a risk of simply extending a different anachronism to past populations. For the purposes of a volume such as this, the name Swahili remains valid as a way of describing a particular phenomenon: a long and complex cultural tradition dating back over millennia. Yet it must be recognised that this name means different things to different people. As discussed above, it is also politically charged in many ways: where to draw the boundaries of Swahili in space and time is a question that often depends on what

aspect of society is under study. There is also a disconnect between scholarship on the earlier coast and contemporary histories and anthropologies, which recognise not only multiple Swahili groups but also groups of outsiders, such as Arabs or Indians (see Prins 1961; Eastman 1971). If we focus on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, one might argue that a particular group of outsiders – Busaidi Omanis – became a defining group of what is now recognised as Swahili (Sheriff, this volume). Yet to extend this definition back in time is obviously problematic. Elsewhere, the Omani period has been dubbed ‘Post-Swahili’, meaning colonial (Chami 1998). Yet as Bissell (this volume) reminds us, Omani Zanzibar and Lamu now stand for most of the world as archetypes of Swahili heritage. For archaeologists of the deeper past, distinctions between outsiders and Swahili are more difficult to distinguish, and politics have often militated against the search for ‘Arab’ traits in early sites. DNA studies might begin to change that, as individual histories can become part of the Swahili story.

p.6

Perspectives in space and time

In this volume we have sought to include as many different perspectives as possible, recognising that the Swahili world looks different depending on where you stand to view it. This is true for contemporary scholars, and the diversity of the coast through space and time means that it would have been true for past inhabitants of the coast as well. Many of the disagreements highlighted above are a question of chronology, geography and worldview of the observer. Archaeologists of early coastal settlements have a very different view of what characterises Swahili society than anthropologists of urban Zanzibar, for example. This is based on different sites of study: artefact traditions vs. living society. It is also because different time periods on the coast have had somewhat different flavours to them, and this is why we must attempt to resist compressing the Swahili world to a single identity or history. It is undoubtedly the case that Swahili people themselves point to different definitions and histories, as recognised for Swahili and Mijikenda groups by Spear (1981: 178), some four decades ago: ‘In the end there will be two histories, theirs and ours. Ours will . . . satisfy us, while theirs continues to satisfy them’. Yet the ‘us’ and ‘them’ referred to here are rather uncomfortable categories and do not account for the significant scholarship from within Swahili society on aspects of identity and history that have emerged since (Salim 1973; Mazrui and Shariff 1994; Kasfir 2004; Topan 2006; Mazrui 2007; al-Maawy 2009). As in the past, these understandings are not uniform across the Swahili world, as is routinely pointed out by scholars working outside the dominant Swahili towns of Lamu, Mombasa and Zanzibar (for example, Caplan 1997; Mazrui and Shariff 1994; Caplan and Topan 2004; Mazrui 2007).

Chronology and change

First century BCE to fifth century CE: early coastal iron-using farmers and their neighbours

Where then do we begin a timeline for the Swahili world? The region was populated long before the mid-first millennium advent of settled villages along the coast (Crowther *et al.* 2016; Boivin and Crowther, Horton and Chami, this volume). Iron-using mixed farming and fishing groups in low-density settlement patterns had been on the coast for several centuries, in ongoing interactions with cattle pastoralist, hunter-gatherer and other farming societies. These communities were probably not the direct ancestors of the society that later came to be called Swahili, but they do represent a long-term tradition of coastal exploitation and interconnection. While some of our contributors reach considerably further back in their discussions, here we begin at the round number of 100 bce to capture this small-scale but dynamic network of people in hamlets and mobile encampments, with whom Classical-period merchant sailors interacted. These were makers and users of Early Iron Age Urewe and Kwale ceramics, the range of which throughout coastal and more interior regions in eastern Africa suggests a large interaction sphere (Soper 1967; Phillipson 1977; Sinclair 1987; Chami 1994, 1998).

The *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (Casson 1989) provides an historical punctuation mark in the first century CE. This navigation manual was written by an Alexandria-based Greek sailor, sailing from Roman Egypt to points along the eastern African coast and on to southern Arabian and Indian ports. For scholars of the coast, the *Periplus* reference to ‘Rhapta’, the Romans’ southernmost port of trade on the coast, provides a mirage-like view of interaction between eastern Africans and foreign merchants. Rhapta has yet to be identified on the ground, and trading sites and goods of this period before 600 CE are scarce, but the *Periplus* foreshadows, however hazily, African/Indian Ocean trade dynamics to come. The diversity of exports listed in the document include ivory and rhinoceros horn from the interior along with coastal nautilus and turtle shell. Greek documents from a few centuries later continue to mention Rhapta (although they may be referring to a different location; Horton and Middleton 2000: 36). We can therefore surmise that some groups of coastal or inland peoples continued to engage in trade with foreign visitors, perhaps at seasonal markets or short-lived ports of trade (Horton and Chami, this volume). Yet, it is difficult to trace a direct line to the later occupation of the coast, or the society that we now call Swahili.

p.7

Sixth to tenth centuries CE: a distinctive coastal culture emerges

Beginning in the sixth century, several coeval shifts took place on the coast.

Archaeologically we see a rapid expansion of settlements on or close to the shore, stretching from Mogadishu (Somalia) to Sofala (Mozambique), and including the near-shore Lamu and Zanzibar Archipelagos, the Comoros Archipelago some 300 km off the coast, and the northern tip of Madagascar (Map 1, p. xxii). The residents of these villages were making and using a new suite of ceramics known by archaeologists as Early Tana Tradition (ETT: Horton 1996)/Triangular Incised Ware (TIW: Chami 1994). These ceramics, characterised particularly by necked jars with incised decoration, were widely distributed by the eighth century, found everywhere on the coast except for Madagascar. ETT/TIW ceramics are found not only at coastal sites from this period, but at sites hundreds of kilometres to the interior, suggesting that during this period the coast remained a part of a broader eastern African region (Soper 1967; Phillipson 1979; Horton 1994, 1996; Håland and Msuya 1994/5; Helm 2000; Chami 2001; Walz 2005; Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2011). ETT/TIW were thus similar to Kwale and Urewe ceramics, in that they were regional traditions rather than tied to specific cultural groups; the broader interaction sphere that these represented remained dominant on the coast until *c.* 1000 CE, when they were replaced by more localised ceramic styles (Chami 2001).

For many, this is the period of Swahili origins, even if the label ‘Swahili’ was not in use until the end of this period, conjured by Arabic-speaking visitors about their coastal hosts. A new pattern of life emerged; we can envision the importance of boats as people moved along the coast to found new settlements, with the latter welcoming and absorbing inhabitants from each new landscape. Mixed agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing and wild plant and animal resources supported the populations (Horton and Mudida 1993; Walshaw 2010; Quintana Morales 2013; Prendergast *et al.* 2016); craft production included iron, boat construction, fishing nets, shell beads and pottery. Trade with foreign merchants is in evidence from the earliest levels of coastal sites of this period: imported goods include diverse glazed ceramics, glassware, copper alloy and other metal jewellery and stone and glass beads. These came at first mainly from the Persian Gulf, but increasingly from India, Southeast Asia, the Maldives and Indonesia. Imported goods were clearly valued locally, but were always only a small proportion of the total goods people surrounded themselves with. Quantified studies suggest the development of particular emporia during this period, where foreign trade was more intense (Priestman, this volume). Mogadishu, at the northern end of the coast, had early prominence in foreign trade and was, by the ninth century, trading gold from as far away as the Zimbabwe plateau to foreign traders. During this period, we also see the founding of Unguja Ukuu and many sites on Pemba, and the beginning of the Zanzibar Archipelago’s prominence on the central coast.

Many of the coast’s mainstay exports were raw materials with ephemeral archaeological signatures (animal products, mangrove poles), yet objects of eastern African origin have been recovered around the Indian Ocean rim (Horton and Middleton 2000). Trade in

captive peoples took place at least by the ninth century (Kusimba 2004): peoples brought from the interior, transported through centres including Zanzibar and Pemba to destinations in the Middle East. The ‘Zanj Revolt’ of 868, in the headlands of the Gulf of Basra (Popović 1976), included people of eastern African origin.

Within this 400-year period, contact with Muslim traders came to be particularly important to emergent coastal culture and society and the religion was practised on the coast at an early date (Insoll 2003). The earliest evidence is a timber mosque of the mid-eighth century at Shanga in the Lamu Archipelago (Horton, Shanga, this volume). Significant trading settlements developed from earlier, smaller villages in these centuries; in addition to Unguja Ukuu and Shanga, we see others in Kenya including Manda, Pate and Ungwana, Tumbe on Pemba, Chibuene in Mozambique and Dembeni in the Comoros. These were not urban settlements in scale or primacy within settlement systems at this point, but some grew into them in later centuries.

Eleventh to fifteenth centuries CE: stonetown-centred polities, increased coastal wealth and influence

We are necessarily leaving out distinct settlement and regional histories in this overview; these are to be found in the chapters that follow. The eleventh to sixteenth centuries are more difficult to summarise than the centuries before, as coastal regions became more distinct from one another. We see localised historical trajectories centred around larger towns, the prominence of different Islamic sects, varied resource bases and access to Indian Ocean trade and distinctive relationships with neighbouring populations (Horton 1994). Yet this is also the period when a distinctively coastal culture began to coalesce: overall expansion of foreign trade with concomitant trade linkages to interior locations; continuing conversion to Islam; the growth of towns as some rural populations chose urban life (Kusimba 1999; Helm 2000; Wynne-Jones 2007; LaViolette 2008; Fleisher 2010). Town and village economies remained based on mixed farming and fishing and local production. Many smaller towns probably traded predominantly with larger coastal centres for their share of imports, rather than developing or maintaining steady and direct ties with foreign merchants, although there is still much to be learned about the relationships of smaller settlements with international trading networks.

In this period, historical observations give us insight into some, perhaps exceptional, places. A tenth-century first-hand account by al-Mas’udi (Freeman-Grenville 1962) described the place ‘Qanbalu’, with a Muslim ruling family (probably on Pemba; LaViolette, this volume). In 1220, Yaqut noted that Mogadishu was a diverse and prominent urban centre, as it remained when Ibn Battuta visited in 1331. The latter’s visit to Kilwa produced a description of that town’s sophistication in glowing terms. Zheng He’s famous circumnavigation of the Indian Ocean in the early fifteenth century was probably not the first Chinese contact with eastern Africa (Duyvendak 1949; Snow 1988;

Shen 1995; Zhao and Qin, this volume), but was the most significant; it included interactions with Swahili leaders in Malindi (Kenya), with whom the finest imperial porcelain was exchanged.

One of the most visually important changes of these centuries – clearly noted by the outside chroniclers – was a transformation in building technology. The reef-coral (*Porites*) buildings of the first millennium were eventually replaced by the use of fossilised coral (coral rag) structures, which retained the use of reef coral for architectural details. While the use of coral had been restricted to a selection of religious and civic buildings in the first millennium, in the second it was used to build houses of certain elites. Some towns came to have dozens of such houses, but more typically there were a handful, or none at all. The presence of ‘stone’ houses and other buildings came to define Swahili townscapes and provide an index of the wealth and power of this period (Garlake 1966; Allen 1979; Kusimba 1999; Horton and Middleton 2000; Wynne-Jones 2013, 2016). Yet rectangular wattle-and-daub buildings with thatched roofs remained in the majority throughout the history of the coast.

p.9

Conversion to Islam continued and, by the eleventh century, the majority of coastal dwellers were practising Muslims. Other indigenous spiritual practices continued alongside and interwoven with Islam, as we see up to the present, although from the thirteenth century onward to be Swahili was to be a practising Muslim.

Sixteenth to twenty-first centuries CE: colonialism and persistence

Swahili coastal cities became targets of a new kind of interaction in the last years of the fifteenth century. From 1498 to 1505 the Portuguese attempted a conquest of the coast, sacking a number of important centres including Mombasa and Kilwa. The ‘Portuguese period’ included destruction, disruption and settlement of limited numbers of people; it was not a full-blown colonisation. Their early sixteenth-century presence is known from historical sources (Strandes [1899] 1961). These also provide a wealth of evidence on the coastal communities that the Portuguese encountered when they first appeared on the regional scene (Pearson 2003; Vernet 2005, 2015). Archaeology is only just beginning to focus on this period (Norman and LaViolette 2016), but Portuguese structures are known at Malindi, Zanzibar Town, and elsewhere on Zanzibar, Pujini on Pemba, and at Kilwa (Pearson 1998). Fort Jesus in Mombasa, built by Portuguese in 1593 (Kirkman 1974), and the 1697 shipwreck of *São Antonio de Tanna* off Mombasa Island have been the subject of study (Sassoon 1980; Kiriamu, this volume). Many Swahili communities continued without significant transformations into the sixteenth century and later, but the Portuguese presence signalled other changes as Omani Arab economic interests, long in effect on the coast, became predatory.

The Omani colonial period ranges from the late seventeenth to the late nineteenth century; it is also in this period that the Swahili language gained the most Arabic vocabulary. By the mid-seventeenth century, the ruling Ya'rubī clan of Oman began its own naval raids on the coast (Sheriff 1987: 17; Cunha 2009: 213), leading to the successful ousting of the Portuguese from Fort Jesus in 1698 and the establishment of Ya'rubī power in Mombasa. This ended the first wave of Portuguese colonisation efforts on the coast; even in Mozambique their presence was minimal until the late nineteenth-century wave of European colonisation entered a new phase there. The Omanis had cultural and religious beliefs that overlapped in important ways with Swahili people, and they went on to have a strong impact on the coast in multiple aspects of life. Yet this was not a seamless transition. At the end of the seventeenth century, the Prince of Faza and the Queen of Zanzibar were some of the most important allies of the Portuguese against the Omani siege of Mombasa, suggesting that local opinion did not see the Omani presence as inevitable, or indeed desirable. Yet, in the eighteenth century, political power in Oman shifted to the Bu'saidi clan, who moved their power base from Oman to the Zanzibar Archipelago; Zanzibar Town became the main residence of the sultan in the 1840s and the history of Omanis in Zanzibar came to dominate historical understandings (Bennett 1978: 21, 44).

The late nineteenth century was a period in which European interest in Africa was booming, culminating in the 1884–5 Berlin Conference, which formalised the division of land between European powers. Yet European interests in eastern Africa remained strategic rather than territorial, and British/German rule was experienced very differently from the Omani colonialism that had come before. The British had been a growing player in the region for several decades by the time of the Conference, attempting to regulate slave-trading activities in the Indian Ocean (Sullivan [1873] 2011) and establishing a route of communication with southern Africa via the Suez Canal, which was later formalised as the Cape Cable telegraph route (Newland 2009). This and the existence of a protectorate on the Kenya coast, contributed to demonstrating 'effective occupation' – a key principle of the Berlin agreement. Britain and Zanzibar's relations were friendly and in 1890 the establishment of a British Protectorate over the archipelago reflected their support for the sultanate. Yet for the Swahili coast the nineteenth century was a time during which Omani rule was experienced at a local level, with little British intervention until the beginning of the twentieth century (Sheriff 1987: 214; Middleton 1992: 47; Pearson 1998). In contrast, the impact of Omani power on the coast led to some key economic changes, such as the shift to a plantation economy featuring different crops in different regions, and an intensification of the trade in enslaved Africans, both to work on the plantations and to export into wider Indian Ocean networks (Alpers 1975, 2000; Croucher 2015). This was tied to increased caravan trading, especially through Tanzania, and led to the growth of inland urban centres such as Tabora and Ujiji (Wynne-Jones and Croucher 2007), new coastal towns that connected to caravan routes, including Bagamoyo and Pangani (Rockel 2006), the growth of Chake Chake on Pemba, and Zanzibar Town. This

enhanced mobility also contributed to the spread of the Swahili language as a lingua franca across eastern Africa as far as the lake regions. In postcolonial Kenya and Tanzania, Swahili has become the official language, breaking its long connection with the coast; yet this spread can also be seen as part of the Swahili historical trajectory, as the expansion of commerce in later centuries led to the spread of the language (Mazrui 2007).

p.10

From the late nineteenth century, the Swahili coast was incorporated into a series of different political configurations under British, German and Portuguese colonial rule, later replaced by the independent countries of contemporary eastern Africa: Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique. The history of European colonialism in eastern Africa was relatively brief. The 1885 Berlin Treaty established German control across what is now Tanzania and a British 'sphere of influence' along the Kenyan coast and inland to Uganda. The coastal strip of Kenya was administered as a protectorate technically ruled from Zanzibar. By 1890 Germany had ceded their Kenyan territory to the British, and Britain took lingering German holdings in the Lakes region and further south in Tanganyika in 1916. Portugal's relationship with Mozambique was longer, having begun in the late fifteenth century, but it remained a sparse presence until the late nineteenth century; Mozambique became a Portuguese colony as late as 1929.

Yet the impact of this period on the Swahili coast was profound. First, British colonial rule established a system of categories of person based on 'native' and 'non-native' status. The precise content of the categories differed, with Indians, for example, considered 'native' by the Germans and 'non-native' by the British. The basis for this category was in theory a person's origins, but in practice their race; this slipperiness allowed for a certain amount of negotiation. As is pointed out by several authors in this volume, coastal residents occupied a complex position in these projects of categorisation. The comparative advantage derived from Arab ('non-native') versus African ancestry would have motivated certain identity claims, and yet these jived neatly with existing discourses about coastal identity. Swahili coast residents had long looked beyond the continent in the construction of their genealogical narratives (Pouwels 1984) and the claims of many to 'Arab' ethnicity under British rule were simply the latest way this conversation was played out. Claims to Shirazi/Arab identity were also part of an ongoing dialogue between older coastal residents and more recent arrivals on the coast who claimed the term 'Swahili' (Glassman 1995). The colonial period on the coast did not, therefore, fundamentally reshape self-identification processes on the coast, but instead positioned them within a more general project of classification that sought to create bounded racialised categories from a broad spectrum of ancestry and lifestyle (Brennan 2012, [chapters 1](#) and [2](#)).

p.11

Second, the colonial period was fundamental to the creation of the postcolonial states of independent eastern Africa. The present-day borders of Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania and

Mozambique divide the coast along lines that have little logic for the culture of the coast. Madagascar gained independence from the French in 1960, but the islands of the Comorian Archipelago and the Mascarene islands experienced a more complex and ongoing relationship with French rule. Two of them (Réunion and Mayotte) continue to be administered by the French as overseas departments. As discussed, the Swahili coast has never been a united geopolitical or economic entity, but did share key cultural characteristics, not least Islam and a common language. At independence, coastal residents found themselves part of larger nation states, predominantly Christian and of course African; claims to Arab ancestry began to feel more of a disadvantage. Nowhere was this more dramatically felt than on Zanzibar, where the Omani elite were violently purged by the Afro-Shirazi revolution of 1964. Yet the archipelago consistently supports an Islamic party in Tanzanian elections, fighting against incorporation into the hegemony of mainland Christian political culture. The Swahili scholarship we describe above is itself affected by this positioning of the coast within postcolonial nation states, and the move to exploring the Swahili as an African society is in part a response to the colonial context of early research favouring overseas connections.

Periods of time and modes of understanding

This brief overview makes clear the problem with which we began this chapter: how to represent the diversity of the Swahili world, the character of its different time periods, and the many ways of knowing that past. Our answer has been to divide this volume chronologically, and to let each section be populated by whichever disciplinary approach suits it best.

The Swahili coast, however regionally unique its culture became, is part and parcel of Iron Age developments in eastern Africa, themselves linked to earlier transformations across the continent: from Late Stone Age changes in subsistence, to the spread of iron technology, to the dynamic connections being made and remade between regions within and beyond the continent in the first and second millennia CE (Mitchell 2005). Most of the archaeological contributors to the volume work from this perspective. From another, more external one, Swahili civilisation is also part of a series of medieval transformations worldwide; through its late first-millennium, early second-millennium metamorphosis into an Islamic culture, it was part of the expanding Dar al Islam. Swahili society is also, of course, a contemporary society affected by and proud of their heritage, but not defined by it.

Our focus has been on the pre-colonial Swahili, and what we refer to as the ‘Swahili Age’. There are several other volumes which explore contemporary Swahili society (Askew 2002; Loimeier and Seesemann 2006; McIntosh 2009; Stiles 2009; Stiles and Thompson 2015), and we might have filled another book with contributions solely about

the last 50 years of the coastal past. Yet that was not our intention in planning this volume, which aims instead to give a sense of the entire narrative: the many worlds that might have been called Swahili over the last two millennia.

References

- Abungu, G. H. O. and Mutoro, H. W. 1993. 'Coast-interior settlements and social relations in the Kenya hinterland'. In *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns*, edited by T. Shaw, P. J. J. Sinclair, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, 694–704. London: Routledge.
- Allen, J. de V. 1979. 'The Swahili house: cultural and ritual concepts underlying its plan and structure'. In *Swahili Houses and Tombs of the Coast of Kenya*, edited by J. de V. Allen and T. H. Wilson, 1–32. London: Art and Archaeology Research Papers.
- Allen, J. de V. 1993. *Swahili Origins: Swahili Culture and the Shungwaya Phenomenon*. London: James Currey.
- al-Maawy, H. S. 2009. *Waswahili wa Utamaduni Wao [The Swahili and Their Culture]*. Mombasa: Self-published.
- Alpers, E. A. 1975. *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa*. London: Heinemann.
- Alpers, E. A. 2000. 'Recollecting Africa: diasporic memory in the Indian Ocean world'. *African Studies Review* 43 (1): 83–99.
- Askew, K. 2002. *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bennett, N. R. 1978. *A History of the Arab State of Zanzibar*. London: Methuen.
- Brennan, J. 2012. *Taifa: Making Nation and Race in Tanzania*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Caplan, P. 1997. "'But the coast, of course, is quite different": academic and local ideas about the East African littoral'. *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1 (2): 305–20.
- Caplan, P. 2007. *African Voices, African Lives: Personal Narratives from a Swahili Village*. London: Routledge.
- Caplan, P. and Topan, F. (Eds) 2004. *Swahili Modernities: Culture, Politics, and Identity on the East Coast of Africa*. Trenton: Africa World Press.
- Casson, L. 1989. *Periplus Maris Erythraei: Text with Introduction, Translation and Commentary*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Chami, F. 1994. *The Tanzanian Coast in the First Millennium ad: An Archaeology of the Iron-Working, Farming Communities*. Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis, Studies in African Archaeology 7.

- Chami, F. A. 1998. 'A review of Swahili archaeology'. *African Archeological Review* 15 (3): 199–218.
- Chami, F. 2001. 'The archaeology of the Rufiji region since 1987–2000: coastal and interior dynamics from AD 00–500'. In *People, Contacts and the Environment in the African Past*, edited by F. Chami, G. Pwiti and C. Radimilahy, 7–20. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press.
- Chittick, H. N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*, 2 Vols. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Chittick, H. N. 1984. *Manda: Excavations at an Island Port on the Kenya Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Croucher, S. K. 2015. *Capitalism and Cloves: An Archaeology of Plantation Life on Nineteenth-Century Zanzibar*. New York: Springer.
- Crowther, A., Faulkner, P., Prendergast, M. E., Quintana Morales, E. M., Horton, M., Wilmsen, E., *et al.* 2016. 'Coastal subsistence, maritime trade, and the colonization of small offshore islands in eastern African prehistory'. *Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology* 11 (2): 211–37, doi:10.1080/15564894.2016.1188334.
- Cunha, J. T. 2009. 'The Portuguese presence in the Persian Gulf'. In *The Persian Gulf in History*, edited by L. G. Potter, 207–34. New York: Macmillan.
- Duyvendak, J. J. L. 1949. *China's Discovery of Africa*. London: Probsthain.
- Eastman, C. M. 1971. 'Who are the Waswahili?' *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 41 (3): 228–36.
- Fleisher, J. B. 2010. 'Swahili synoecism: rural settlements and town formation on the central East African coast, AD 750–1500'. *Journal of Field Archaeology* 35 (3): 265–82.
- Fleisher, J. and LaViolette, A. 2013. 'The early Swahili trade village of Tumbe, Pemba Island, Tanzania, AD 600–950'. *Antiquity* 87 (338): 1151–68.
- Fleisher, J. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2011. 'Ceramics and the early Swahili: deconstructing the Early Tana Tradition'. *African Archeological Review* 28 (4): 245–78.
- Fleisher, J., Lane, P. J., Horton, M., Pollard, E., Quintana Morales, E., Vernet, T., Christie, A. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2015. 'When did the Swahili become maritime?' *American Anthropologist* 117 (1): 100–15.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1962. *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the First to the Earlier Nineteenth Centuries*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Garlake, P. S. 1966. *The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- Glassman, J. 1995. *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast 1856–1888*. London: James Currey.
- Glassman, J. 2000. 'Sorting out the tribes: the creation of racial identities in colonial Zanzibar's newspaper wars'. *The Journal of African History* 41 (3): 395–428.

- Håland, R. and Msuya, C. S. 1994/5. 'Pottery production, iron working, and trade in the Early Iron Age: the case of Dakawa, east-central Tanzania'. *Azania* 35: 75–103.
- Helm, R. 2000. 'Conflicting histories: the archaeology of iron-working, farming communities in the central and southern coast region of Kenya'. PhD diss., University of Bristol.
- Helm, R. 2004. 'Re-evaluating traditional histories on the coast of Kenya: an archaeological perspective'. In *African Historical Archaeologies*, edited by A. Reid and P. Lane, 59–90. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.
- Horton, M. C. 1991. 'Primitive Islam and architecture in East Africa'. *Muqarnas* 8: 103–16.
- Horton, M. C. 1994. 'Closing the corridor: archaeological and architectural evidence for emerging Swahili regional autonomy'. In *Continuity and Autonomy in Swahili Communities*, edited by D. Parkin, 15–21. London: SOAS.
- Horton, M. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Horton, M. C. and Mudida, N. 1993. 'Exploitation of marine resources: evidence for the origins of the Swahili communities of East Africa'. In *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns*, edited by T. Shaw, P. Sinclair, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, 673–93. London: Routledge.
- Insoll, T. 2003. *The Archaeology of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kasfir, S. L. 2004. 'Tourist aesthetics in the global flow: orientalism and "warrior theatre" on the Swahili coast'. *Visual Anthropology* 17 (3/4): 319–43.
- Kirkman, J. S. 1964. *Men and Monuments on the East African Coast*. London: Lutterworth.
- Kirkman, J. S. 1974. *Fort Jesus: A Portuguese Fortress on the East African Coast*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1999. *The Rise and Fall of Swahili States*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira.
- Kusimba, C. M. 2004. 'Archaeology of slavery in East Africa'. *African Archaeological Review* 21 (2): 59–88.
- Kusimba, C. M. 2016. 'Foreword: foundings of an African civilization'. In *Swahili Monumental Art and Archaeology North of the Tana River*, by T. H. Wilson, ix–xi. Nairobi: National Museums of Kenya.
- LaViolette, A. 2008. 'Swahili cosmopolitanism in Africa and the Indian Ocean world, AD 600–1500'. In 'The Archaeology of Colonialism and Contested Modernities', edited by C. Cobb and D. Loren, special issue. *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological*

- Congress 4 (1): 24–49.
- LaViolette, A. 2013. 'The Swahili world'. *Oxford Handbook of African Archaeology*, edited by P. Mitchell and P. Lane, 901–14. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Loimeier, R. and Seesemann, R. (Eds) 2006. *The Global Worlds of the Swahili: Interfaces of Islam, Identity and Space in 19th and 20th-Century East Africa*. Berlin: LIT Verlag.
- Mazrui, A. M. 2007. *Swahili Beyond the Boundaries: Literature, Language, and Identity*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Mazrui, A. M. and Shariff, I. N. 1994. *The Swahili: Idiom and Identity of an African People*. Trenton: African World Press.
- McIntosh, J. 2009. *The Edge of Islam: Power, Personhood and Ethnoreligious Boundaries on the Kenya Coast*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Middleton, J. 1992. *The World of the Swahili: An African Mercantile Civilization*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Mitchell, P. 2005. *African Connections: An Archaeological Perspective on Africa and the Wider World*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira.
- Newland, C. 2009. 'An archaeology of telegraphy (1830–1930), with a case study of the Cape Cable'. PhD diss., University of Bristol.
- Norman, N. and LaViolette, A. 2016. 'Avant-garde and awaiting support: considerations of the uneven stops and starts of the colonial project'. Paper presented at the 23rd Biannual Meeting of the Society of Africanist Archaeologists, Toulouse.
- Nurse, D. and Spear, T. 1984. *The Swahili: Reconstructing the History and Language of an African Society ad 800–1500*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Pearson, M. N. 1998. *Port Cities and Intruders: The Swahili Coast, India, and Portugal in the Early Modern Era*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Pearson, M. 2003. *The Indian Ocean*. London: Routledge.
- Phillipson, D. W. 1977. *The Later Prehistory of Eastern and Southern Africa*. London: Heinemann.
- Phillipson, D. W. 1979. 'Some Iron Age sites in the lower Tana valley'. *Azania* 14: 155–60.
- Popovic, A. 1976. *La révolte des esclaves en Iraq au III^e/IX^e siècle*. Paris: Paul Guethner.
- Pouwels, R. L. 1984. 'Oral historiography and the Shirazi of the East African coast'. *History in Africa* 11: 237–67.
- Pouwels, R. 1987. *Horn and Crescent: Cultural Change and Traditional Islam on the East African Coast – 800–1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Prendergast, M. E., Rouby, H., Punnwong, P., Marchant, R., Crowther, A., Kourampas, N., *et al.* 2016. 'Continental island formation and the archaeology of defaunation on

- Zanzibar, eastern Africa'. *PLoS ONE* 11 (2): e0149565, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0149565.
- Prins, A. H. J. 1961. *The Swahili-Speaking Peoples of Zanzibar and the East African Coast (Arabs, Shirazi and Swahili)*. London: International African Institute.
- Quintana Morales, E. 2013. 'Reconstructing Swahili foodways: the archaeology of fishing and fish consumption in coastal East Africa, AD 500–1500'. PhD diss., University of Bristol.
- Rockel, S. 2006. *Carriers of Culture: Labor on the Road in Nineteenth-Century East Africa*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Salim, A. I. 1973. *The Swahili-Speaking Peoples of Kenya's Coast, 1895–1965*. Nairobi: East African Publishing House.
- Sassoon, H. 1980. 'Excavations at the site of early Mombasa'. *Azania* 15: 1–42.
- Shen, J. 1995. 'New thoughts on the use of Chinese documents in the reconstruction of Swahili history'. *History in Africa* 22: 349–58.
- Sheriff, A. 1987. *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar*. London: James Currey.
- Sinclair, P. J. J. 1987. *Space, Time, and Social Formation: A Territorial Approach to the Archaeology and Anthropology of Zimbabwe and Mozambique c. 0–1700 ad*. Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis.
- Sinclair, P. and Juma, A. M. 1992. *Urban Origins in Eastern Africa: Proceedings of the 1991 Workshop in Zanzibar*. Working Papers from The Swedish Central Board of National Antiquities 8.
- Snow, P. 1988. *The Star Raft: China's Encounter with Africa*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson.
- Soper, R. 1967. 'Iron Age sites in north-eastern Tanzania'. *Azania* 2: 19–37.
- Spear, T. 1981. 'The Shirazi in Swahili traditions, culture and history'. *History in Africa* 11: 291–305.
- Stiles, E. E. 2009. *An Islamic Court in Context: An Ethnographic Study of Judicial Reasoning*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Stiles, E. E. and Thompson, K. D. 2015. *Gendered Lives in the Western Indian Ocean: Islam, Marriage, and Sexuality on the Swahili Coast*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Strandes, J. [1899] 1961. *The Portuguese Period in East Africa*. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau.
- Sullivan, G. L. [1873] 2011. *Dhow Chasing in Zanzibar Waters and on the Eastern Coast of Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tolmacheva, M. 1976. 'The origin of the name "Swahili"'. *Tanzania Notes and Records* 77/78: 27–37.
- Topan, F. M. 2006. 'From coastal to global: the erosion of the Swahili "paradox"'. In *Global Worlds of the Swahili: Interfaces of Islam, Identity and Space in 19th- and 20th-Century*

- East Africa*, edited by R. Loimeier and R. Seesemann, 55–66. Berlin: LIT Verlag.
- Vernet, T. 2005. 'Les cités-états swahili de l'archipel de Lamu, 1585–1810, Dynamiques endogènes, dynamiques exogènes. PhD thesis, Paris I'.
- Vernet, T. 2015. 'East African travellers and traders in the Indian Ocean: Swahili ships, Swahili mobilities c. 1500–1800'. In *Trade, Circulation, and Flow in the Indian Ocean World*, edited by M. Pearson, 167–202. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Walshaw, S. 2010. 'Converting to rice: urbanization, islamization and crops on Pemba Island Tanzania, 700–1000'. *World Archaeology* 42 (1): 137–54.
- Walz, J. 2005. 'Mombo and the Mkomazi corridor'. In *Salvaging Tanzania's Cultural Heritage*, edited by B. Mapunda and P. Msemwa, 198–213. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press.
- Willis, J. 1993. *Mombasa, the Swahili, and the Making of the Mijikenda*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Wright, H. T. 1993. 'Trade and politics on the eastern littoral of Africa, AD 800–1300'. In *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns*, edited by T. Shaw, P. J. J. Sinclair, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, 658–70. London: Routledge.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2007. 'Creating urban communities at Kilwa Kisiwani, Tanzania, AD 800–1300'. *Antiquity* 81: 368–80.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2013. 'The public life of the Swahili stonehouse'. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 32: 759–73.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2016. *A Material Culture: Consumption and Materiality on the Coast of Precolonial East Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wynne-Jones, S. and Croucher S. 2007. 'The central caravan route of Tanzania: a preliminary archaeological reconnaissance'. *Nyame Akuma* 67: 91–5.

PART I

Environment, background and Swahili historiography

Environment

2

THE EASTERN AFRICAN COASTAL LANDSCAPE

Paul J. Lane and Colin P. Breen

Introduction

Eastern Africa's 'Swahili coast' is conventionally considered to extend from around Mogadishu (Somalia, 2.0333° N, 45.3500° E) in the north, to either Cape Delgado (10.8600° S, 40.6400° E) near the modern Mozambique–Tanzania border (for example, Kusimba 1999: 21) or Sofala (19.8333° S, 34.8500° E) in southern Mozambique (for example, Horton and Middleton 2000: 5, Map 1.1), and to include near-shore islands and archipelagos (for example, Lamu, Pemba, Zanzibar, Mafia and Kerimba), the Comoros Islands, and sections of northwest Madagascar (LaViolette 2013: 903, Fig. 62.1). As a geographical entity, the eastern African coast extends beyond Mogadishu up to Cape Guardafui (Somaliland) and the island of Socotra (Yemen), although in the contemporary political geography of the Indian Ocean the latter is considered to be part of Asia. Both localities were certainly connected to Swahili communities further south, but were never fully part of 'the Swahili world'; likewise, Chibuene, other sites around Vilanculos Bay and Inhambane in southern Mozambique are often periodically included in discussions of the Swahili world and its antecedents (for example, Chami 1994: 14–18; Ekblom and Sinclair, this volume) but strictly speaking were not part of the Swahili coast. Here, following more dominant convention, we consider the stretch of coastline and nearshore islands between Mogadishu and Sofala, along with the Comoros and north-western Madagascar, as all forming part of the geography of the 'Swahili coast'.

Despite extending for a distance of over 3,000 km, there has been a tendency within the archaeological literature to regard the Swahili coast as a relatively uniform entity characterised solely by its reef systems, mangroves and beaches. Instead, as might be expected given that it spans almost 31 degrees of latitude, the coastline is a complex of different physical entities, formed by a range of regional processes and characterised by varying morphology. The coast can also be divided into different biogeographic provinces and ecotypes that include dune systems, coastal floodplains, marshland, mangrove forests,

coral reefs, reef-back lagoons, archipelagos, sea cliffs and sandy beaches. The boundaries between these have also changed over time, even within the last 1,500 years, as a result of climate and sea level change. This physical variance had important consequences for the distribution of coastal settlement and the nature and range of cultural activities that took place at these locations, and would have influenced the diversity of natural marine and terrestrial resources available at any locality. The following sections outline some of the major physical, climatic and biogeographical characteristics.

p.20

A note on dates and their abbreviation: as most of the dates given in the cited publications below were obtained using the radiocarbon method and in all cases were calibrated (albeit using slightly different calibration curves), we use bp here to mean ‘calibrated years Before Present (i.e. 1950)’, and ky bp to mean ‘thousand years Before Present’. More precise Common Era dates are simply rendered as numbers, for example 1640, without a qualifying AD prefix or CE suffix. The term Holocene refers to the current epoch of geological time, spanning the last 11,700 years of the Earth’s history, with generally accepted boundaries at 8200 bp for the Early to Middle transition and 4200 bp for the Middle-Late boundary (Walker *et al.* 2012).

Oceanography and marine life

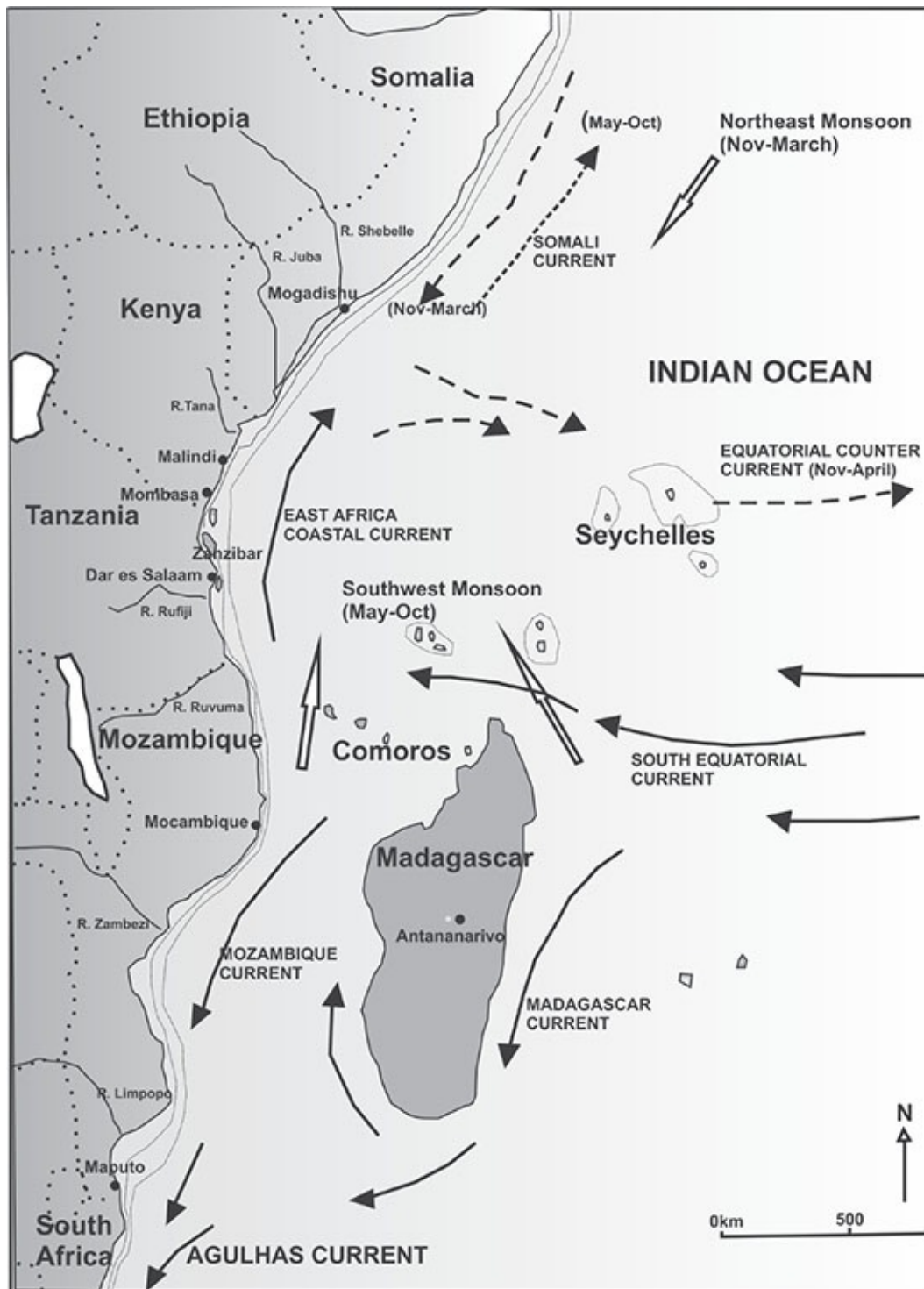
The primary defining feature of the Africa’s eastern coastline is its relatively narrow continental shelf system averaging 15–25 km in width. This narrowness creates a number of issues, limiting bio-productivity in comparison with broader shelf systems elsewhere. Productivity is further limited by the nature of the coast’s bathymetry. Shelves tend to stretch to the 200 m isobath before seabed depth drops rapidly to 4,000 m eastwards. The edge of the shelf is located at varying distances offshore ranging from between 3 km to over 70 km by the Unguja Archipelago (Hartnoll 1974). South of Zanzibar Island seabed depths drop to over 600 m at a distance of 40–50 km from the shore but are shallow again around Mafia. In the Mozambique Channel depths drop to over 2,000 m between 2 and 3 km offshore in the northern part of the channel, but this depth range extends further offshore south of Angoche. The deep waters, such as those off Mogadishu, the Pemba Channel and the Mozambique Channel, are nutrient rich. Seasonal fluctuations in up-welling along the Somali coast occur when these nutrient-rich waters are brought to the surface by strong current activity, leading to high primary and secondary biomass productivity in the shallow waters off its coast (McClanahan 1988). South of *c.* 4° S, down-welling off the central section of the Swahili coast results in nutrient-poor waters and low biological productivity. This down-welling is continuous, but is especially prominent during the SE monsoons when currents are at their strongest. Some up-welling may occur here during the NE Monsoon owing to the movement of ocean currents away

from the coast, with the consequence that fish catch and reproduction are highest on the Kenya and Tanzania coasts during this period (McClanahan 1988).

The force and direction of major currents also influence productivity and other physical characteristics of this coastline. Specifically, the South Equatorial Current (SEC) flows from the eastern part to northern Madagascar and Africa. Once it reaches the western Indian Ocean it splits in two, one flowing south, comprising the Madagascar Current and the perennial Mozambique Current, and the other flowing north, called the East African Coastal Current (EACC). South of Madagascar, the East Madagascar current and the Mozambique current join to form the southwards flowing Agulhas Current ([Figure 2.1](#)). Further north the EACC becomes the Somali Current and joins the Indian Monsoon Current (Richmond 2011). Consequently the region can be spilt into three hydrographic zones:

- 1 Somali upwelling zone: north-east of Somali coast;
- 2 Monsoon current zone: Tanzania, Kenya, Seychelles;
- 3 Agulhas and Mozambique current zone: Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Mozambique.

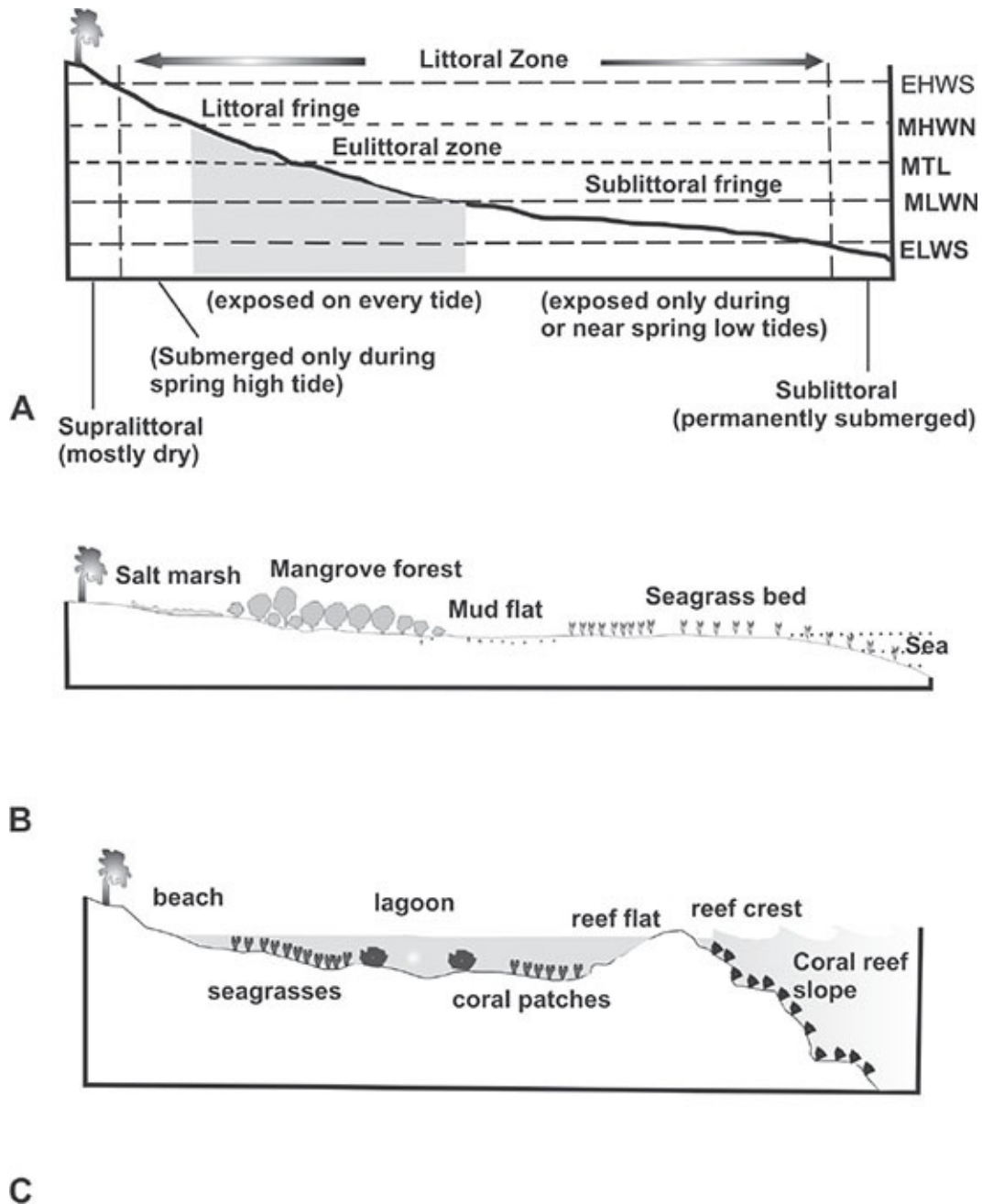
Aside from the currents, most of the region features semi-diurnal gravitational tides, experiencing two high and low tides in each lunar day, with a tidal range of between 2–4 m, rising to 5 m in parts of Mozambique owing to the influence of the Mozambique Channel. These gravitational tides have the greatest influence on diurnal and seasonal fluctuations in sea level, although radiational tides derived from changes in barometric pressure and the direction and intensity of onshore–offshore winds contribute as well (Pugh 1979). Tidal range combined with shore topography range determine the extent of the littoral (or maximum intertidal) zone adjacent to the terrestrial shoreline, and hence have consequences for the species composition of the fringing vegetation and the range of marine life in this zone ([Figure 2.2](#)). As shoreline topographies vary widely, and are subject to change over time, the resource potential of different sections of the coast will therefore also vary across space and time (Richmond 2011: 14–17).



[Figure 2.1](#) The distribution of major currents in the western Indian Ocean (based on Richmond 2011, Figure 2)

Throughout the western Indian Ocean species composition is high, with over 11,000 species of marine flora and fauna, of which 60–70 per cent are endemic to the Indo-Pacific oceans, including at least 369 species of coral and 12 species of seagrass (Obura 2012). Up to 2,200 fish species are present, 450 crab species, 3,000 molluscs, 400 echinoderms and five of the world’s seven turtle species (Richmond 2011). The latter have long been hunted for their shells, meat and eggs, along with dugongs for their flesh and oil.

Archaeological and historical evidence would suggest that fishing primarily took place initially in the nearshore environment exploiting a range of habitats, reefs, mangroves and mudflats. Species including parrotfish, emperor fish, rock cod and sea bass appear to have been the most commonly caught fish, suggesting hook and line fishing was the most common method (Prendergast and Quintana Morales, this volume). Deep water fish appear in the record only rarely until the late first millennium, suggesting that pelagic fishing was not common until the development of new boat technologies and associated seafaring skills. The intensity of fishing in some localities, nonetheless, may have resulted in some localised species extinctions, and comparison of fish catch compositions and fish-size data reconstructed from archaeological and historical records show some of the characteristics of classic ‘fishing down the marine web’ over time (McClanahan and Omukoto 2011).



[Figure 2.2](#) Typical cross-sections of western Indian Ocean shorelines, illustrating their different zonation (based on Richmond 2011, Figures 3, 5 and 7)

Climate

The direction and movement of different ocean currents and monsoon seasons heavily influence the biogeography of region (Moll and White 1978). The monsoons were of particular importance to past maritime trade and coastal activity, as both the regularity and historically recent predictability of this wind system dictated the movement of vessels and controlled many aspects of coastal communications. From late November to mid-March the prevailing wind direction is from the north-east, becoming more north-westerly south

of the equator. This monsoon period is referred to in KiSwahili as the *Kaskazi*. It was during the NE monsoon that vessels left the Arabian coast for East Africa during the historic period (Sheriff 1987: 10–12), and this is likely to have been the case in earlier periods as well. The *Kaskazi* brings fair weather and a short rainy season between October and December. A transitional period emerges at the end of March before the *Kusi*, or southerly winds, begin to predominate. This transitional period coincides with the main rainy season, which on the Kenya and Tanzania coasts last between March and June. Further south, rainfall is less bimodal and mainly concentrated between November and April. There is a complete reversal of wind direction between June and September, when the SE monsoon (*Kusi*) dominates. The SE monsoon winds are much stronger (averaging around Force 5 or 9 m/second, compared with current speeds of less than 0.2 m/s during the NE monsoon), than the *Kaskazi* winds, and this was the season when vessels would have left the African coast to journey north. However, from mid-May to mid-August the offshore weather systems intensify and would often have produced storm conditions unsuitable for past dhow activity. A further transitional period, the *Matalai*, occurs from mid-September to mid-November, bringing rains and slight wind.

p.23

These seasonal changes in wind direction have important implications for air and water temperature as well as rainfall (McClanahan 1988). Rainfall in equatorial and southern eastern Africa is bimodal, with the heaviest rains experienced between mid-March and May. However, precipitation levels across the region are generally low. The migration of the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), i.e. the area where the northeast and southeast trade winds converge, to and fro across the equator, is the primary determinant factor. During October and November the ITCZ moves rapidly southwards, resulting in fairly brief episodes of heavy rainfall (hence the colloquial naming of this period as ‘the short rains’), whereas during April and May the ITCZ moves more slowly, resulting in a more prolonged periods of heavy rainfall (‘the long rains’). Cyclones are also present but are less well understood. They are more common in the Arabian Sea, at the southern end of the Mozambique Channel and across the islands to the south including Madagascar and the Comoros, generally occurring between September and April.

Climate research has shown that in addition to these large-scale circulations, the seasonal rainfall cycle is influenced by the regional topography, and inter-annual rainfall variation is significantly determined by variations in surface sea temperatures (SSTs). As in the Pacific Ocean system, these are partly influenced by the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO), with warm events and thus higher SSTs linked to higher than average rainfall, and cold events and lower SSTs (La Niña) with low rainfall. Extreme El Niño events can result in severe bleaching and subsequent death of corals, as happened across large portions of the tropical Indian Ocean in 1997/8, with knock-on consequences for coral reef fish populations (Wilkinson *et al.* 1999; Garpe *et al.* 2006). Recent research also suggests that the Indian Ocean dipole (IOD) (also called the Indian Ocean zonal mode or IOZM) may

be particularly important. This inter-annual event gives rise to regional variation in SSTs, such that when SSTs warm over the western Indian Ocean there is a corresponding cooling of SSTs in the eastern Indian Ocean, and vice versa (Marchant *et al.* 2007: 6).

Further global-scale systems would also have played an important part in the region's past meteorological history. These past episodic events need to be better understood in the context of the Swahili coast's human history. Unfortunately, at present, there have been relatively few studies aimed at reconstructing changing vegetation patterns and local climatic conditions at various points along the coast, and some of the more comprehensive studies lie at the extreme south of the region under consideration here (for example, Ekblom 2008; Norström *et al.* 2012; Ekblom *et al.* 2014; Siteo *et al.* 2015). Regional trends, which must have had consequences for coastal communities are, nonetheless, now quite tightly defined chronologically.

Specifically, and in broad terms, the climate of eastern Africa was warmer and wetter than today between *c.* 11000 and 5000 bp, likely owing to a change in the Earth's axial rotation around the Sun triggering a phase of maximum monsoon intensity throughout the southwest Indian Ocean. This is commonly known as the African Humid Period. More arid conditions returned after the mid-Holocene from *c.* 4500 to 4100 bp, with significant impacts on regional and continental hydrological regimes until *c.* 2700 bp, when the climate became more variable. For the Late Holocene, significant alternating fluctuations between wetter and drier conditions have been recorded. These relate to broader global trends but with regionally specific characteristics. Overall, the trend from *c.* 2000 bp appears to have been toward wetter conditions for much of inland East Africa. However, there was a distinct phase of increased aridity between *c.* 950 and 680 bp (*c.* 1000–1270) roughly corresponding to the northern hemisphere Medieval Warm Period, followed by wetter conditions from *c.* 680 to 100 bp (*c.* 1270–1850) (i.e. approximating the northern hemisphere's Little Ice Age) (see Kiage and Liu 2006 and references therein). These wetter conditions were followed by a period of prolonged drought across much of eastern Africa during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century (Bessems *et al.* 2008), which was succeeded by a period of high rainfall during the early decades of European conquest and colonial rule.

p.24

These regional studies are now being supplemented by information from more site-specific studies involving the analysis of the geochemical records of coral annual growth rings; foraminiferal species, alkenones (algal lipids) and isotopic signatures recorded in deep-sea cores; and pollen, diatoms, charcoal and other plant remains recovered from sediment cores taken from areas of mangrove forest, coastal lakes and floodplain deposits, adding to understanding of sub-regional variations and similarities. Analysis of alkenones recovered from cores off the Somali coast, for example, suggest that SSTs were comparatively high during the Early Holocene (and hence likely indicative of higher

rainfall and amplified monsoon activity), and significantly lower throughout the Middle Holocene associated with more frequent droughts, with temperature spikes occurring between *c.* 5500 and 3800 bp (Bard *et al.* 1997; Abram *et al.* 2007). The effects of these variations extended well beyond the coastal strip and may possibly correlate with water-level variability in at least some of the Rift Valley lakes (Bloszies and Forman 2015). The rate of change during the Holocene also appears to have been both quite rapid and progressive, spanning approximately 3,500 years (Weldeab *et al.* 2014).

For more recent eras, the geochemical signatures of annual growth rings on coral recovered offshore from Malindi on the south-central Kenya coast indicate a rise of 1.3° C since the 1800s (Cole *et al.* 2000), and the existence of a coastal pluvial from *c.* 1680 to 1765, while coral record data from a study site in the Mozambique Channel off southwest Madagascar indicate that the period between 1675 and 1760 was significantly cooler by 0.3–0.5° C, with the warmest periods occurring between 1880–1900 and 1973–1995 (Zinke *et al.* 2004; Maina *et al.* 2013).

Sea-level change

Sea level has continually fluctuated over millennia, with obvious consequences for coastal settlement. When sea levels rose these would have included inundation of settlements, the intensification of coastal erosion and vulnerability of settlements and crops to storm damage, possible heightened ground-water salinity, and changing distributions and species compositions of mangroves and other coast vegetation. When they fell, the consequences would have included slowing down of coastal erosion, widening of the inter-tidal zone, and shallowing of water depths close to shore and altered tidal ranges. Under either scenario, the distribution of coastal and near-shore marine resources and habitats are likely to have changed, which may have had knock-on effects for coastal communities including their farming strategies, settlement location decisions, fishing practices, and the suitability of different places as port settings (see Pollard 2009; Prendergast and Quintana Morales, this volume). However, ascertaining high-resolution data and area-specific information is problematic, making it difficult to assess the veracity of various periodic claims regarding the ‘discovery’ of the remains of submerged ‘towns’, such as off Ungwana (northern Kenya) and most recently off the south-western coast of Mafia (the latter set being almost certainly of natural origin). While there are locations where settlement remains do survive underwater (as elsewhere in the world), such as at Kisimani Mafia, it is yet to be determined whether this is due to inundation as a consequence of sea-level rise, or merely the effects of ongoing coastal erosion causing landward retreat of the coast, or both. Moreover, the currently available records from different points on the Swahili coast and elsewhere in the western Indian Ocean are at times contradictory, or at least cannot be easily correlated. Early- to mid-Holocene sea-level change in the region is understood in terms of broad patterning from information derived primarily from coring reef systems.

Late Holocene data are far less clear and the levels from the past 2,000 years are little understood, making it difficult as yet to relate such changes directly to the available archaeological and historical records of Swahili settlement. This is slowly changing, however, as palaeoecological studies of mangrove systems are becoming available.

p.25

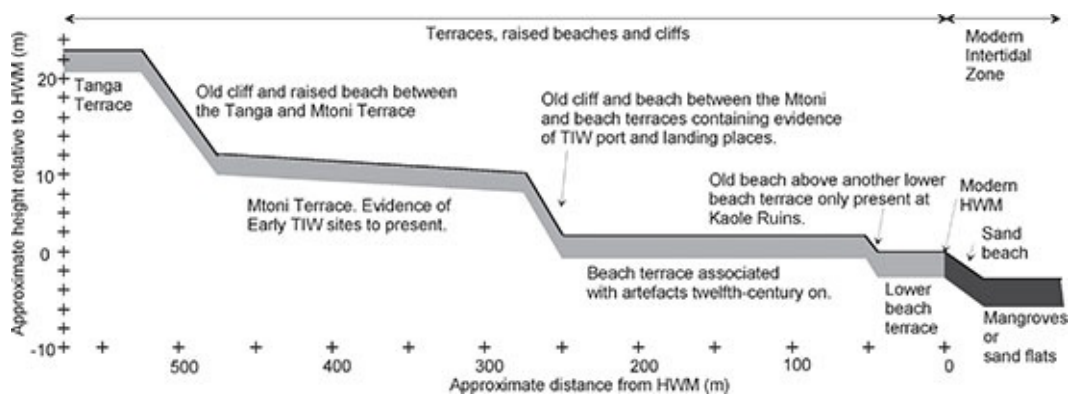
Initial geomorphological work by Åse (1978, 1981) identified various raised coastal features up to an altitude of 20 m above current relative sea level (rsl) along the Kenyan coast, potentially representing eight different high stands, with the terraces at 10 m to 11 m rsl said to represent sea level 3,000 years ago, and the terraces at 1.5 m rsl to be at least 500 years old. These raised terraces ([Figure 2.3](#)) were also thought to have been affected by differential land uplift, with greater uplift in the north around Malindi compared with that slightly farther south around Kilifi. The fringing reefs, beach ridges and terraces on Zanzibar and the Tanzanian mainland have also been studied (Alexander 1969; Arthurton *et al.* 1999; Arthurton 2004; Muzuka *et al.* 2004). Three major terraces can be identified on the mainland: the Mtoni (youngest), Tanga and Sakura (oldest), each separated by a period of erosion. The Tanga terrace occurs continuously along the coast from Dar es Salaam to the Kenya border, with four former limits at 2–3 m, 4.5–6 m, 24–27 m and 41 m rsl. Raised limestone terraces also occur on Zanzibar. These are several metres lower than those on the mainland and are likely to represent minor sea-level fluctuations.

The dating of the transitions that produced the different terrestrial and submarine geomorphological features along the coast and around the offshore islands is also variable. An early study undertaken by Jaritz and colleagues (1977) produced a sea-level curve from the coast of Mozambique based on 20 radiocarbon dates. These suggested that in the early Holocene sea level was at –60 m, rising to its present level around 7000 bp, and by a further +3 m some 1,000 years later. Subsequent work along the northern Zululand coast in South Africa similarly suggested that sea level attained its present height after an Early Holocene low-stand between 7000 and 6000 bp (Ramsay 1995; Ramsay and Cooper 2002). Thereafter, minor oscillations occurred, with a maximum local rise of +3.5 m around 4500 bp, followed by a –2 m fall around 3000 bp, a +1.5 m rise at around 1600 bp, and a return to the present level by *c.* 900 bp.

Evidence of sea-level change has also been reconstructed from coral reef records from the Maoré/Mayotte (Comoro Islands) foreslope. A major submerged reef terrace at 110–115 m below present sea level has been dated to between 18,000 and 17,000 bp, and two further reef terraces at depths of between 90 and 60 m were dated to 13,600 bp (Camoin *et al.* 1997; Camoin *et al.* 2004). More recent studies, employing several integrated lines of evidence including coring and dating of coral reefs and elevation of reef terraces, and results from work undertaken further out in the Indian Ocean around Mauritius and La Réunion, have refined these scenarios. In broad terms, at the height of the Last Glacial Maximum (LGM) between *c.* 23 and 18 ky bp, global sea levels were *c.* 120 m lower than

currently. With a warming global climate sea level rose rapidly during the Early Holocene, interspersed by a significant slowing around the time of a period of abrupt global cooling known as the Younger Dryas event (12.8–11.5 ky bp) (Zinke *et al.* 2003). Dating of various cores suggest that between 11,600 and 9600 bp, sea level rose at a rate of 19 mm yr⁻¹, decreasing to 9 mm yr⁻¹ between 9600 and 8000 bp, decreasing further to 3 mm yr⁻¹ after 7000 bp, with general stabilisation to present levels some 3000–2500 years ago (Zinke *et al.* 2003). During the later Holocene, sea level continued to fluctuate, with rises up to 3.5 m above current level and falls in the region of –1–2 m.

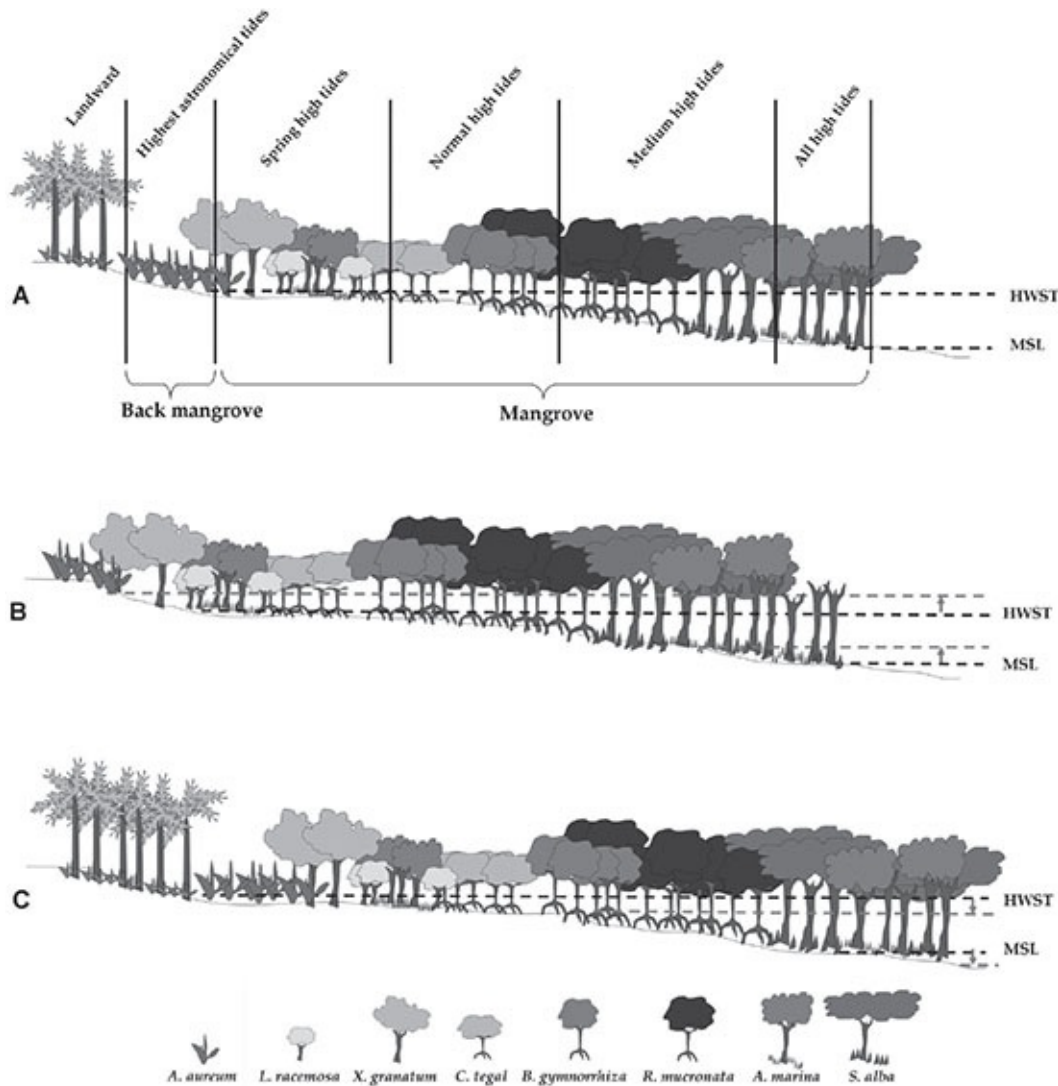
p.26



[Figure 2.3](#) Schematic section of relative position of different marine terraces on the Tanzania coast near Kaole (Source: Pollard 2009, Figure 5, reproduced with permission)

The timing of these events may not have been synchronous across the western Indian Ocean, however. For example, analysis of the growth history of the fringing reef at Pointe-au-Sable (Mauritius) has indicated that both offshore and onshore reef zones were developing coevally, aggrading at rates of 4–3 mm year⁻¹ from 6900 bp before eventual sea-level stabilisation (Montaggioni and Faure 1997). In the Maldives, reef cores have demonstrated that between 8100 and 6500 cal. bp there was steady growth, then a slowing down over the next 2,000 years. Present sea-level was reached c. 4500 cal. bp, but increased to 0.50 m ±1 m higher than today between 4000 and 2100 cal. bp, before again falling (Kench *et al.* 2009).

p.27



[Figure 2.4](#) A typical association of Rufiji delta mangroves showing response to sea level change (Source: Punwong *et al.* 2013c, Figure 1, reproduced with permission)

Recent palaeoecological studies at different coastal sites also reveal that mangrove ecosystems have varied, partly in response to broader regional climate changes but also sea-level fluctuation. Different mangrove species have different levels of tolerance of salinity and root exposure and so will colonise different parts of the littoral zone ([Figure 2.4](#)). Changes in sea level and changes in local topography, such as caused by tectonic process, sedimentation or erosion, which alter local tidal regimes, may therefore precipitate a change in species composition. Certain species are particularly sensitive to these changes and so can be used as proxy indicators of either a change in shoreline topography and/or sea level. The combined results of studies of mangrove dynamics in the Rufiji Delta (Tanzania), and Makoba Bay and Unguja Ukuu (Zanzibar), point to an initially rapid mid-Holocene sea level rise from ~ 8000 bp to within -3.5 m of present-day rsl, followed by a more gradual rise reaching current rsl around 4400 bp (Punwong *et al.* 2013a, 2013b; Woodroffe *et al.* 2015). During this phase, mangroves would have migrated landward, as documented at Makoba Bay and the Rufiji Delta and reached higher elevations than where

they are found today (Punwong *et al.* 2013c). Decreases in the proportion of *Sonneratia* pollen, which prefers the mid- to low-intertidal zone, relative to other key mangrove taxa that colonise more terrestrial settings in all three coring locations, coupled with increases in charcoal, grasses and terrestrial tree species pollen, indicate a subsequent drop in sea-level and possibly drier conditions, although the dating of the onset of these events during the mid-Holocene may have varied. After *c.* 1450–1550 bp, sea level rose again, probably to levels above current rsl, followed by a sequence of minor fluctuations during the last 1,000 years. Evidence for human management of mangroves remains difficult to determine with confidence, although reductions in mangrove extent coupled with changes in species composition and an overall rise in macroscopic charcoal, as documented around Unguja Ukuu from around 530 bp could have resulted from anthropogenic processes (Punwong *et al.* 2013b). Data from sediment cores taken from close to Pangani, northern Tanzania, tend to confirm these recent reconstructions of regional sea-level change, while also highlighting the contribution of allochthonous sediments derived from erosion inland, especially during the early Holocene, and their potential to complicate depositional records along the littoral (Liu *et al.* 2016).

It is important to note that a range of processes drive sea-level change, making it difficult to predict future trends even if, globally, sea levels are currently rising although at different rates. Recent gauge-data from a 40-year period for the North Indian Ocean region, for example, shows a regional average rise of 1.29 mm yr^{-1} , in line with $1\text{--}2 \text{ mm yr}^{-1}$ global sea-level-rise estimates (Unnikrishnan and Shankar 2007). This is not a uniform picture across the Indian Ocean, however, as further research has shown that, since the 1960s, sea level has decreased substantially in the south tropical region of the Ocean while increasing elsewhere (Han *et al.* 2010). Moreover, while some of the past regional variation was ‘almost certainly due to the complex pattern of interaction of glacio-isostatic processes following the last deglaciation, and possibly from tectonic movements of the Earth’s crust as well as changes in oceanographic conditions’, the use of ‘different proxies, error margins and scales of analysis’ are also likely to be contributory factors (Prendergast *et al.* 2016: 2). Consequently, while we can generalise about change on a regional basis, developing site-specific studies will be important for improving understanding of localised fluctuations in sea level over the past 2,000 years in particular.

Geology and physical features

Continental Africa’s eastern seaboard was formed following the fragmentation of Gondwanaland, and most of the rocks along the coast are of Jurassic, Cretaceous or Tertiary origin (*c.* 251–65 million years old), comprising a combination of marine shales, marls, sandstones and basalts. These are overlain in several places by limestone deposits

originating from former coral reefs formed during the Pleistocene (*c.* 1.6 million to 10,000 years ago), now exposed as a consequence of a combination of tectonic activity and sea-level change (Coffin and Rabinowitz 1988). The Comoro Islands are an exception, formed through volcanic activity at the northern end of the Mozambique Channel beginning around 8 million years ago (Emerick and Duncan 1982) and ending around 10,000 years ago when the youngest island, Ngazidja (Grand Comore) was formed. The islands are primarily comprised of alkali olivine basalts, although phonolitic and trachytic lavas also occur. The island of Madagascar became detached from the continental mainland during the Cretaceous (*c.* 67 million years ago), the western third of which 'is composed of two large basins of late Palaeozoic to Recent sedimentary and volcanic rock' (Ashwal and Tucker 1999: 355). Superficial Quaternary deposits on these different land masses include alluvial deposits of gravel, silt and clay, estuarine muds, sand dunes, fossil coral and diverse beach sands.

Coral reefs and banks dominate the inshore topography along much of the Swahili coast, and are most prevalent where the continental shelf broadens. There is significant variance in reef types and systems, however, with those located at the northern end of the region subject to slower growth as a result of cold upwelling (Richmond 1997). In contrast, the southern systems have higher diversity and growth rates. Visually, the most prominent feature is the fringing reef system stretching from Somalia in the north, southwards to South Africa. This rarely lies more than 2 km from the coast and ranges from 100 to 200 m in width. In most areas the reef system is continuous, but broken in the vicinity of rivers and embayments. Additionally, both Tanzania and Mozambique have off-shore platforms or patch reefs (Arthurton 2004). All these reef systems provide a variety of functions including coastal protection and as fishing grounds, and serve as important ecosystems for marine life more generally. Traditionally, building blocks were mined from shallow water corals and from the raised Pleistocene reefs, while the latter were also exploited for lime making. Freshly-cut *Porites* coral can be shaped into ashlar blocks when wet and was used at least since the tenth century for building (Pollard, this volume).

The fringing reef is succeeded inland by a back reef-platform consisting of a wave-cut platform or a lagoon cut at the base of low cliffs (Kairu and Nyandwi 2000). A number of further primary features characterise the coastline, including embayments, mangrove forests and a series of sandy coasts formed by the accretion of beaches and the seaward migration of the shoreline. These tend to be low-lying and relatively stable structures. Sediment material has also been carried by rivers to the coast where it has been deposited in a series of riverine deltas (Kairu and Nyandwi 2000: 11). Within these deltas a further series of features can be identified including sand spits, shallow alluvium banks and low islands. It is also important to stress that there is considerable variation in terms of coastal environments and geomorphological features along the entire length of the Swahili coast. Rocky headlands and limestone cliffs are present in Tanzania, for example, while complex dune systems are notable in Mozambique and southern Somalia. Dunes are most frequently

found in river mouths, and are probably associated with high sediment discharge. This variation in coastal geomorphology, coupled with differences in underlying bedrock and climatic conditions, also influences the composition and structure of the vegetation found on the coast and offshore islands.

p.29

Vegetation

The natural vegetation of the eastern African seaboard is dominated by a comparatively narrow belt of coastal forest, the northern limits of which lie in southern Somalia, where it merges with grassy, semi-arid to arid steppe vegetation (Lind and Morrison 1974; White 1983; [Figure 2.5](#)). The coastal forest belt is at its widest across northern and central Mozambique, where it extends several hundreds of kilometres inland, especially along major river valleys. There are several breaks in the forest belt, mostly as a result of human activity and recent coastal development. The most significant natural break is around the Zambezi river delta, where the coastal forest gives way to deciduous forest-woodland savanna, also the characteristic natural vegetation of north-western Madagascar.

Within these three broad natural vegetation zones, several different ecoregions have been defined (Lind and Morrison 1974; White 1983). These are, from north to south, as follows.

Hobyo grassland and shrubland

The most northerly ecoregion of the 'Swahili coast', as defined here, comprises a long, narrow and low-lying coastal plain studded with sand dunes, dominated by perennial dune grasslands and sedges. The dunes can reach a maximum height of around 60 m, and extend between 10 and 15 km inland, where the habitat becomes a mix of semi-desert and dry savanna vegetation. The ecoregion forms the southernmost part of White's (1983) Somalia-Masai semi-desert grassland and shrubland vegetation unit. It runs approximately from the central point of the Somali coast to slightly south of Mogadishu.

Somali Acacia-Commiphora bushlands and thickets

Lying immediately south of the Hoboyo ecoregion, this is characterised by a mix of endemic, arid-adapted, dryland scrub species and dry woodlands that grade into grasslands and deserts further inland with increasing aridity. Characteristic species of the open bushland habitats are *Combretum hereroense* and *Grewia tenax*, while *Ficus sycomorus*, *Mimosops degan* and *Acacia stenocarpa* typify the riparian forests (Pignatti and Warfa 1983).

Northern Zanzibar-Inhambane coastal forest

This constitutes the northern end of the coastal forest belt, and extends from the Juba Valley in central coastal Somalia, along the entire coastal belt of Kenya and northern and central Tanzania as far south as the modern town of Lindi, including all of the adjacent islands and archipelagos. The ecoregion exhibits considerable habitat diversity and, in view of its high species richness and levels of species endemism, is today regarded as a biodiversity and conservation hotspot (Burgess *et al.* 1998; Burgess and Clarke 2000). Trees comprise 48 per cent of the flora, with lianas, shrubs, herbs, ferns, grasses, epiphytes and sedges comprising the other dominant types. The tree species composition of different patches changes frequently. *Afzelia quanzensis*, *Scorodophloeus fischeri*, *Dialium holtzii*, *Hymenaea verrucosa*, *Millettia struhlmanni*, *Berlinia orientalis*, *Cynometra* spp. and *Xylia Africana* are among the more common. Forest cover is now highly fragmented, composed of over 200 individual patches, of which the largest is the Arabuko-Sokoke Forest on the central Kenya coast near Malindi. This, like the other significant patches (Tana River Primate Reserve, Shimba Hills National Reserve and Saadani Game Reserve) is now a protected area. The Kenya and northern Tanzania hinterland also contains a number of traditionally protected sacred groves known as ‘kayas’, noted for their biodiversity and socio-cultural and historical significance (Willis 1999; Helm 2004).

p.30

Southern Zanzibar-Inhambane coastal forest mosaic

This extends for approximately 2,200 km from just north of the modern town of Lindi, southwards to slightly beyond Xai-Xai, southern Mozambique. The landscape is more rolling than the coastal plain further north, and is dotted with several isolated inselbergs and higher plateaus. These landscape features support a mosaic of different habitats, including savanna woodland, coastal forest, swamps, sand dunes and marshy estuaries. Rainfall along the coast here averages around 800 mm p.a., and mean temperatures range from 30–27 °C at the northern end to around 24 °C near Xai-Xai (Moll and White 1978).

Comoros forests

The natural vegetation on these volcanic islands is predominantly tropical forest and cloudforest, shaped by a combination of the maritime tropical climate, bedrock, altitude and physical isolation from the continent. Large-scale clearance for the creation of plantations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and more localised clearance for farming resulted in the total removal of the islands’ natural vegetation from lowland areas, and patches now only survive on steeper mountain slopes except over lava flows where the thin soils can only support sparse herbaceous vegetation. Major forest plant families include *Sapotaceae*, *Ebenaceae*, *Rubiaceae*, *Myrtaceae*, *Clusiaceae*, *Lauraceae*, *Burseraceae*,

Euphorbiaceae, *Sterculiaceae*, *Pittoscoraceae*, and *Celastraceae* (Hoff and Sastre 1991). There is a fairly high degree of species endemism, and the islands' flora and fauna share more biogeographical affinities with Madagascar than the mainland.

Zambezi coastal flooded savanna

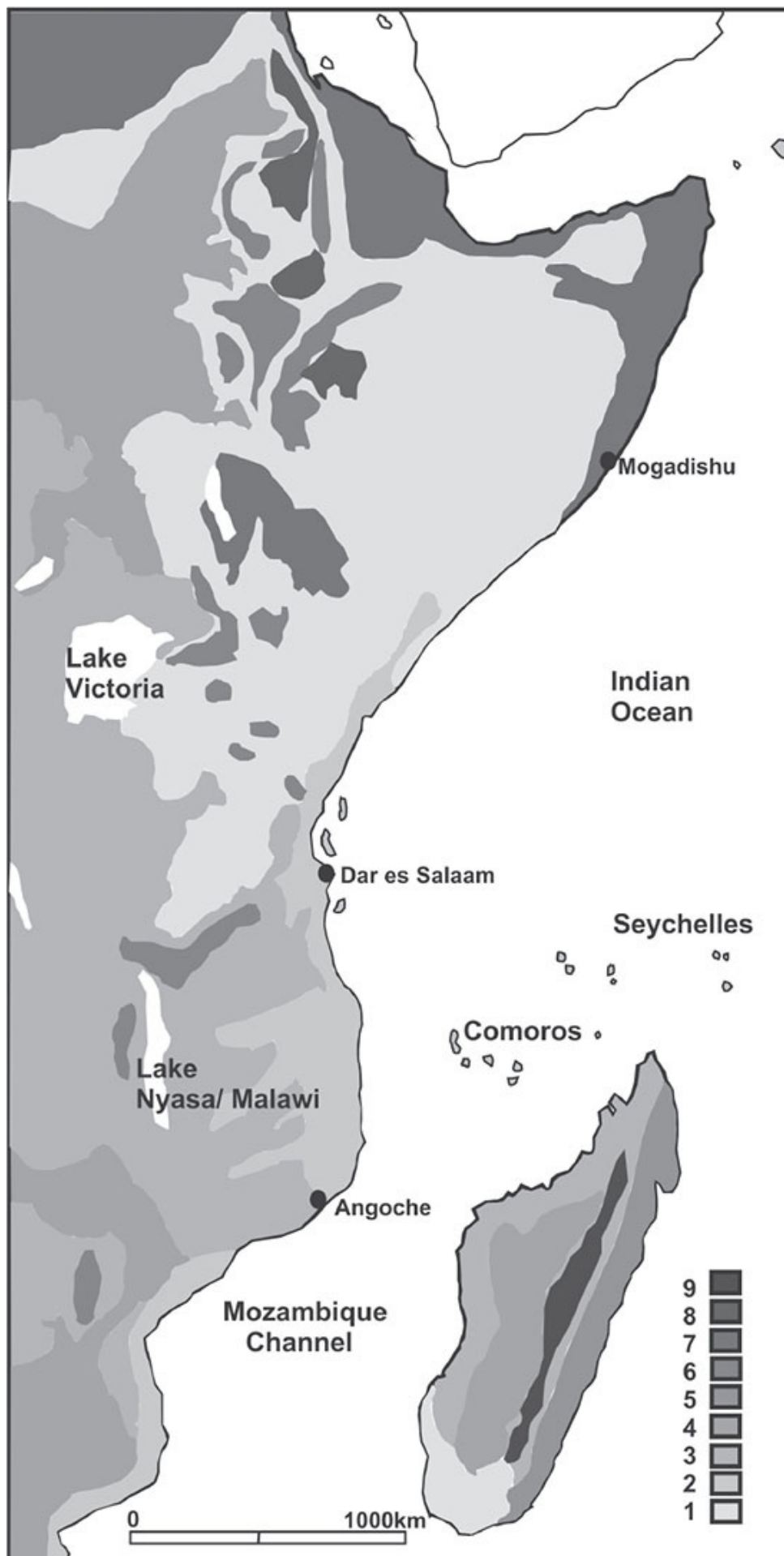
This ecoregion is embedded within the southern Zanzibar-Inhambane coastal forest mosaic, and is restricted to the southern central portion of the Mozambique coast. The Zambezi delta, covering *c.* 200 km of this stretch of the Mozambique coast, comprises most of this ecoregion, coupled with the smaller deltas of the Savi, Buzi and Pungwe Rivers. The swampy floodplains, deltaic marshes, small inland lakes and brackish lagoons are the primary topographic features of this high annual rainfall lowland zone. Swamp forests, reed swamps typified by *Typha capensis* and *Phragmites australis*, and grassland communities comprise the main vegetation types, the latter often associated with seasonally flooded clayey depressions known as '*tandos*' dominated by open grassland species such as *Hypparhenia*, *Ischaemum* and *Setaria*. More localised patches of dune forests, mangrove and *Borassus* palm savanna also occur (Moll and White 1978). Both the coastal wetlands and deltas include a mix of freshwater, terrestrial and marine environments. These are rich in biota and exhibit fairly high species diversity, especially mammals. These locations are also important habitats for over-wintering and breeding water birds. Historically, this would have been an area of high faunal diversity and species richness, best suited for hunting and gathering with more limited opportunities for mixed agriculture.

Northwest Madagascar

The principal natural vegetation type at the north-western tip of Madagascar is evergreen broadleaf forest. Further south, along the drier sections of the western coast, this gives way to grassland savanna with scattered palm trees, interspersed with patches of dry broadleaf deciduous forest and woodland. Tamarind, baobab and lianas are all common and the dry deciduous forests exhibit high levels of endemism and support many species of lemurs. The coastline is also broken by numerous small bays and inlets and near-shore islands, with significant areas of mangrove swamp, although overall the surviving primary vegetation along the entire west coast of Madagascar is very fragmented (Du Puy and Moat 1996).

Interspersed throughout coastal Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and Madagascar are areas of mangrove covering an estimated 100,000 ha (Chapman 1977). They fall into two principal categories, creek mangroves and fringe communities distributed along open coastlines. They are predominantly found in sheltered embayments and their distribution shows a direct correlation with embayments and deltaic zones. Highly developed

mangroves in Mozambique can extend up to 50 km inland and have a canopy height of 30 m. Nine species of mangrove are commonly found within the region, and their distribution is determined by a combination of factors that include salinity, soil pH and water table depth. As with reef systems, the mangroves play an important role in coastal defence but are also highly productive nursery zones and provide important habitats for birds, fish and mammal species as well as providing an important source of wood, both for fuel and building material (Rasolofo 1997).



[Figure 2.5](#) Overview of the distribution of the main vegetation ecoregions along the Swahili coast and offshore islands (based on Greenway 1973): 1. Steppe (grass, brush and thicket); 2. East Africa coastal forest; 3. Savanna; 4. Deciduous forest-woodland savanna; 5. Brush-grass savanna; 6. Tropical rain forest (broadleaf evergreen); 7. Temperate grassland (veld) and mountain grassland; 8. Semi desert; 9. Montane forest-tundra

p.32

Soils

There is considerable variation in soil type at both subregional and local scales, with at least six of the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) major soil units represented (Jones *et al.* 2013). These are determined by a combination of factors including underlying lithology, prevailing climatic regime, the drainage system and angle of slope. At the northernmost, more arid end of the Swahili coast, soils are predominantly sandy along the coast, becoming deep and loamier further inland with a high calcium carbonate component. Across southern Somalia, the low-lying alluvial plains of the Juba and Shabelle Rivers are predominantly clayey saline soils and often poorly drained. In northern and central Kenya, ferruginous Lixisols and Cambisols including calcareous sandy clays and loamy sands predominate. In the northern part of the Southern Zanzibar-Inhambane coastal forest mosaic ecoregion, acid Ferrosols and Acrisols dominate, while Alfisols predominate in much of northern Mozambique, giving way to alluvial and fluvial deposits in the Zambezi Delta. Soils on the Comoros are of volcanic origin and, although fertile, they are also shallow and prone to erosion, especially once forest cover is removed.

Conclusion

The 'Swahili coast', regardless of exactly how its geographical extent and limits are defined, exhibits enormous biophysical variation. The boundaries between the sea and dry land, size and shape of the intertidal littoral and dominant fauna and flora in these zones have also all changed over the course of the last ten thousand years. While these changes were perhaps more pronounced during the early and mid-Holocene, and so may have had greater consequences for Late Stone Age hunter-gatherer-fishers and possibly early farming communities, the coast has remained a dynamic and changing mosaic of different environments up to the present and these shifts, whether minor or more substantial, would have also had consequences and presented both opportunities and challenges for Swahili populations along the coast. The spatial diversity exhibited along the coast in

terms of natural resource distributions, surface and shoreline topography, and offshore bathymetry likewise would have both constrained and enabled human activities differentially according to the setting. To date, this considerable environmental and climatic diversity has yet to be fully appreciated by the majority of archaeologists working on the coast, or incorporated into their interpretations of the human record of Swahili settlement, economic practices and livelihood strategies. It is hoped that this chapter will go some way to changing this, and that the next few decades will see the production of more nuanced reading of the material evidence informed by a detailed understanding of the long-term historical ecologies of the Swahili coast.

References

- Abram, N. J., Gagan, M. K., Liu, Z., Hantoro, W. S., McCulloch, M. T. and Suwargadi, B. W. 2007. 'Seasonal characteristics of the Indian Ocean dipole during the Holocene epoch'. *Nature* 445 (7125): 299–302.
- Alexander, C. S. 1969. 'Beach ridges in northeastern Tanzania'. *Geographical Review* 59: 104–22.
- Arthurton, R. 2004. 'The fringing reef coasts of eastern Africa: present processes in their long-term context'. *Western Indian Ocean Journal of Marine Science* 2 (1): 1–14.
- Arthurton, R. S., Brampton, A. H., Kaaya, C. Z. and Mohamed, S. K. 1999. 'Late Quaternary coastal stratigraphy on a platform-fringed tropical coast: a case study from Zanzibar, Tanzania'. *Journal of Coastal Research* 15 (3): 635–44.
- Åse, L.-E. 1978. 'Preliminary report on studies of shore displacement at the southern coast of Kenya'. *Geografiska Annaler, Series A, Physical Geography* 60: 209–21.
- Åse, L.-E. 1981. 'Studies of shores and shore displacement on the southern coast of Kenya, especially in the Kilifi district'. *Geografiska Annaler, Series A, Physical Geography* 63: 303–10.
- Ashwal, L. D. and Tucker, R. D. 1999. 'Geology of Madagascar: a brief outline'. *Gondwana Research* 3: 335–9.
- Bard, E., Rostek, F. and Sonzogni, C. 1997. 'Interhemispheric synchrony of the last deglaciation inferred from Alkenone palaeothermometry'. *Nature* 385: 707–10.
- Bessemis, I., Verschuren, D., Russell, J. M., Hus, J., Mees, F. and Cumming, B. F. 2008. 'Palaeolimnological evidence for widespread late 18th century drought across equatorial East Africa'. *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology* 259 (2): 107–20.
- Bloszies, C. and Forman, S. L. 2015. 'Potential relation between equatorial sea surface temperatures and historic water level variability for Lake Turkana, Kenya'. *Journal of*

Hydrology, 520: 489–501.

- Burgess, N. D. and Clarke, G. P. (Eds) 2000. *Coastal Forests of Eastern Africa*. Gland: IUCN Forest Conservation Programme.
- Burgess, N. D., Clark, G. P. and Rodgers, W. A. 1998. 'Coastal forests of eastern Africa: status, endemism patterns and their potential causes'. *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society* 64: 337–53.
- Camoin, G. F., Colonna, M., Montaggioni, L. F., Casanova, J., Faure, G. and Thomassin, B. A. 1997. 'Holocene sea level changes and reef development in the southwestern Indian Ocean'. *Coral Reefs* 16: 247–59.
- Camoin, G. F., Montaggioni, L. F. and Braithwaite, C. J. R. 2004. 'Late glacial to post glacial sea levels in the western Indian Ocean'. *Marine Geology* 206 (1): 119–46.
- Chami, F. A. 1994. *The Tanzanian Coast in the First Millennium ad*. Uppsala: Studies in African Archaeology 7.
- Chapman, V. J. 1977. 'Africa B. The remainder of Africa'. In *Ecosystems of the World 1: Wet Coastal Ecosystems*, edited by V. J. Chapman, 233–40. New York: Elsevier Scientific Publishing Company.
- Coffin, M. F. and Rabinowitz, P. D. 1988. *Evolution of the Conjugate East Africa-Madagascar Margins and the Western Somali Basin*. Boulder: Geological Society of America, Special Paper 226.
- Cole, J. E., Dunbar, R. B., McClanahan, T. R. and Muthiga, N. A. 2000. 'Tropical Pacific forcing of decadal SST variability in the western Indian Ocean over the past two centuries'. *Science* 287: 617–19.
- Du Puy, D. J. and Moat, J. 1996. 'A refined classification of the primary vegetation of Madagascar based on the underlying geology: using GIS to map its distribution and to assess its conservation status'. In *Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Biogeography of Madagascar*, edited by W. R. Lourenço, 205–18. Paris: Editions de l'ORSTOM.
- Ekblom, A. 2008. 'Forest–savanna dynamics in the coastal lowland of southern Mozambique since c. AD 1400'. *The Holocene* 18 (8): 1247–57.
- Ekblom, A., Risberg, J. and Holmgren, K. 2014. 'Coastal forest and miombo woodland history of the Vilankulo region, Mozambique'. *The Holocene* 24 (3): 284–94.
- Emerick, C. M. and Duncan, R. A. 1982. 'Age progressive volcanism in the Comores Archipelago, western Indian Ocean and implications for Somali plate tectonics'. *Earth and Planetary Science Letters* 60 (3): 415–28.
- Garpe, K. C., Yahya, S. A., Lindahl, U. and Öhman, M. C. 2006. 'Long-term effects of the 1998 coral bleaching event on reef fish assemblages'. *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 315: 237–47.
- Han, W., Meehl, G. A., Rajagopalan, B., Fasullo, J. T., Hu, A., Lin, J., et al. 2010. 'Patterns of Indian Ocean sea-level change in a warming climate'. *Nature Geoscience* 3 (8):

- Hartnoll, R. G. 1974. 'Kunduchi Marine Biological Station'. *Tanzania Notes and Records* 74: 39–74.
- Helm, R. 2004. 'Re-evaluating traditional histories on the coast of Kenya: an archaeological perspective'. In *African Historical Archaeologies*, edited by D. A. M. Reid and P. J. Lane, 59–89. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.
- Hoff, M. and Sastre, C. 1991. 'Les flores et les écosystèmes forestiers tropicaux des Départements et des Territoires français d'Outre-Mer'. *Revue Forestière Française* 42: 79–86.
- Horton, M. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Jaritz, W., Ruder, J. and Schlenker, B. 1977. 'Das Quartär im Küstengebiet von Moçambique und seine Schwermineralführung'. *Geologisches Jahrbuch* B26: 3–93.
- Jones, A. *et al.* (Eds) 2013. *Soil Atlas of Africa*. Brussels: European Commission Joint Research Centre – Soil Action. Available online at: <http://esdac.jrc.ec.europa.eu/content/soil-map-soil-atlas-africa> (last accessed 1 May 2017).
- Kairu, K. and Nyandwi, N. (Eds) 2000. *Guidelines for the Study of Shoreline Change in the Western Indian Ocean Region*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Kench, P. S., Smithers, S. G., McLean, R. F. and Nichol, S. L. 2009. 'Holocene reef growth in the Maldives: evidence of a mid-Holocene sea-level highstand in the central Indian Ocean'. *Geology* 37 (5): 455–8.
- Kiage, L. M. and Liu, K. B. 2006. 'Late Quaternary paleoenvironmental changes in East Africa: review of multiproxy evidence from palynology, lake sediments, and associated records'. *Progress in Physical Geography* 30 (5): 633–58.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1999. *The Rise and Fall of Swahili States*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira.
- LaViolette, A. 2013. 'The Swahili world'. In *The Oxford Handbook of African Archaeology*, edited by P. J. Mitchell and P. J. Lane, 901–14. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lind, E. M. and Morrison, M. E. S. 1974. *East African Vegetation*. London: Longman.
- Liu, X., Rendle-Bühning, R., Meyer, I. and Henrich, R. 2016. 'Holocene shelf sedimentation patterns equatorial East Africa constrained by climatic and sea-level changes'. *Sedimentary Geology* 331: 1–11.
- Maina, J., de Moel, H., Zinke, J., Madin, J., McClanahan, T. and Vermaat, J. E. 2013. 'Human deforestation outweighs future climate change impacts of sedimentation on coral reefs'. *Nature Communications* 4: article 1986, doi:10.1038/ncomms2986.
- Marchant, R., Mumbi, C., Behera, S. and Yamagata, T. 2007. 'The Indian Ocean dipole:

- the unsung driver of climatic variability in East Africa'. *African Journal of Ecology* 45: 4–16.
- McClanahan, T. R. 1988. 'Seasonality in East Africa's coastal waters'. *Marine Ecology – Progress Series* 44: 191–9.
- McClanahan, T. R. and Omukoto, J. O. 2011. 'Comparison of modern and historical fish catches (AD 750–1400) to inform goals for marine protected areas and sustainable fisheries'. *Conservation Biology* 25 (5): 945–55.
- Moll, E. J. and White, F. 1978. 'The Indian Ocean coastal belt'. In *Biogeography and Ecology of Southern Africa*, edited by M. J. A. Werger, 561–98. The Hague: W. Junk.
- Montaggioni, L. F. and Faure, G. 1997. 'Response of reef coral communities to sea-level rise: a Holocene model from Mauritius (western Indian Ocean)'. *Sedimentology* 44 (6): 1053–70.
- Muzuka, A. N. N., Nyandwi, N. and Shaghude, Y. W. 2004. 'Preliminary investigation on the Pleistocene/Holocene sea-level changes along the coastline of Tanzania, with reference to Unguja and Pemba Islands'. *Boletim Geológico* 43: 8–13.
- Norström, E., Risberg, J., Gröndahl, H., Holmgren, K., Snowball, I., Mugabe, J. and Sito, S. 2012. 'Coastal paleo-environment and sea-level change at Macassa Bay, Southern Mozambique, since c. 6600 cal bp'. *Quaternary International* 260: 153–63.
- Obura, D. 2012. 'The diversity and biogeography of the western Indian Ocean reef-building corals'. *PLoS ONE* 7(9): e5013, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0045013.
- Pignatti, S. and Warfa, A. M. 1983. 'The Boscaglia Vegetation Complex in southern Somalia'. *Tuexenia* 3: 159–69.
- Pollard, E. 2009. 'Settlement adaptation to a changing coastline: archaeological evidence from Tanzania, during the first and second millennia AD'. *The Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology* 4 (1): 82–107.
- Prendergast, M. E., Rouby, H., Punnwong, P., Marchant, R., Crowther, A., Kourampas N., *et al.* 2016. 'Continental island formation and the archaeology of defaunation on Zanzibar, eastern Africa'. *PLoS ONE* 11 (2): e0149565, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0149565.
- Pugh, D. 1979. 'Sea levels at Aldabra Atoll, Mombasa and Mahé, Western Equatorial Indian Ocean, related to tides, meteorology and ocean circulation'. *Deep-Sea Research* 26A: 237–58.
- Punwong, P., Marchant, R. and Selby, K. 2013a. 'Holocene mangrove dynamics in Makoba Bay, Zanzibar'. *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology* 379: 54–67.
- Punwong, P., Marchant, R. and Selby, K. 2013b. 'Holocene mangrove dynamics from Unguja Ukuu, Zanzibar'. *Quaternary International* 298: 4–19.

- environmental change in the Rufiji Delta, Tanzania'. *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* 22: 381–96.
- Ramsay, P. J. 1995. '9000 years of sea level change along the southern African coastline'. *Quaternary International* 31: 71–5.
- Ramsay P. J. and Cooper J. A. G. 2002. 'Late Quaternary sea level change in South Africa'. *Quaternary Research* 57: 82–90.
- Rasolofo, M. V. 1997. 'Use of mangroves by traditional fishermen in Madagascar'. *Mangroves and Salt Marshes* 1 (4): 243–53.
- Richmond, M. D. (Ed.) 2011. *A Field Guide to the Seashores of Eastern Africa and the Western Indian Ocean Islands*, 3rd edition. Stockholm: Sida/WIOMSA.
- Richmond, R. H. 1997. 'Reproduction and recruitment in corals: critical links in the persistence of reefs'. In *Life and Death of Coral Reefs*, edited by C. Birkeland, 175–97. New York: Chapman & Hall.
- Sheriff, A. 1987. *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar*. London: James Currey.
- Sitoe, S. R., Risberg, J., Norström, E., Snowball, I., Holmgren, K., Achimo, M. and Mugabe, J. 2015. 'Paleo-environment and flooding of the Limpopo River-plain, Mozambique, between c. AD 1200–2000'. *Catena* 126: 105–16.
- Unnikrishnan, A. S. and Shankar, D. 2007. 'Are sea-level-rise trends along the coasts of the north Indian Ocean consistent with global estimates?' *Global and Planetary Change* 57 (3): 301–7.
- Walker, M. J. C., Berkelhammer, M., Björck, S., Cwynar, L. C., Fisher, D. A., Long, A. J., *et al.* 2012. 'Formal subdivision of the Holocene series/epoch: a discussion paper by a Working Group of INTIMATE (Integration of Ice-Core, Marine and Terrestrial Records) and the Subcommittee on Quaternary Stratigraphy (International Commission on Stratigraphy)'. *Journal of Quaternary Science* 27 (7): 649–59.
- Weldeab, S., Menke, V. and Schmiedl, G. 2014. 'The pace of East African monsoon evolution during the Holocene'. *Geophysical Research Letters* 41, doi:10.1002/2014GL059361.
- White, F. 1983. *The Vegetation of Africa: A Descriptive Memoir to Accompany the UNESCO/AETFAT/UNESCO Vegetation Map of Africa*. Paris: UNESCO Natural Resources Research No. 20.
- Wilkinson, C., Lindén, O., Cesar, H., Hodgson, G., Rubens, J. and Strong, A. E. 1999. 'Ecological and socioeconomic impacts of 1998 coral mortality in the Indian Ocean: an ENSO impact and a warning of future change?' *Ambio* 28 (2): 188–96.
- Willis, J. 1999. 'The Northern Kayas of the Mijikenda: a gazetteer and an historical reassessment'. *Azania* 31: 75–98.
- Woodroffe, S. A., Long, A. J., Punwong, P., Selby, K., Bryant, C. L. and Marchant, R. 2015. 'Radiocarbon dating of mangrove sediments to constrain Holocene relative sea-level change on Zanzibar in the southwest Indian Ocean'. *The Holocene* 25 (5): 820–31.

- Zinke, J., Reijemer, J. J. G., Thomassin, B. A., Dullo, W.-Chr., Grootes, P. M. and Erienkeuser, H. 2003. 'Postglacial flooding history of Mayotte Lagoon (Comoro Archipelago, Southwest Indian Ocean)'. *Marine Geology* 194: 181–96.
- Zinke, J., Dullo, W. C., Heiss, G. A. and Eisenhauer, A. 2004. 'ENSO and Indian Ocean subtropical dipole variability is recorded in a coral record off southwest Madagascar for the period 1659 to 1995'. *Earth and Planetary Science Letters* 228 (1): 177–94.

3

RESOURCES OF THE OCEAN FRINGE AND THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE MEDIEVAL SWAHILI

Edward Pollard

It is accepted that the maritime environment underpinned Swahili economy and society. Not only was it central to the Indian Ocean trade that formed the basis of wealth and power, it is still reflected in the very fabric of the towns through their coral stone architecture (see Gensheimer, this volume). While that architecture is today the most visible legacy of Swahili society at its medieval peak, it represents just one element of a range of resources derived from the coastal hinterland environment that once supported the port cities. Here I review the archaeology of that maritime resource use. The investigation extends beyond the urban edge to some of the less explored, secluded parts of harbours and coastal fringe, including the intertidal zone. This area, with its rough terrain, impenetrable vegetation and absence of regular and organised transport, is nonetheless rewarding, as it reveals signs of the provision of sustenance, building and trade resources. It also was a location for industries that, for environmental and resource reasons, may have been conducted peripherally to the main settlements. Investigation of the coastal fringe complements studies of the towns and trading structures, and contributes to a more holistic view of activities and relationships in a society whose maritime heritage is so notable.

Resources: their historical and archaeological traces

The key maritime resources derive from an environment that varies between mangrove-rich creeks, estuaries and rias (drowned estuaries), sandy coasts formed from river deposition, and the raised coral limestone and coral reef coasts found on higher-energy exposed coasts. Fringing reefs on exposed coasts may be situated at the seaward end of a wave-cut platform, or enclose shallow lagoons at low tide. Substantial sediment deposition occurs near river mouths, providing sediment to form sand flats, spits and sandy lagoons

often vegetated with seagrass. In sheltered areas such as creeks and estuaries, mangroves grow into dense forests between the neap high and low water marks, known as the eulittoral zone. Depending on the steepness of the beach gradient, there can also be wide unforested sediment flats below and above the eulittoral zone. On the landward margin, sand flats are often referred to locally as *jangwani* after the Swahili term for desert and a reference to the lack of vegetation.

p.37

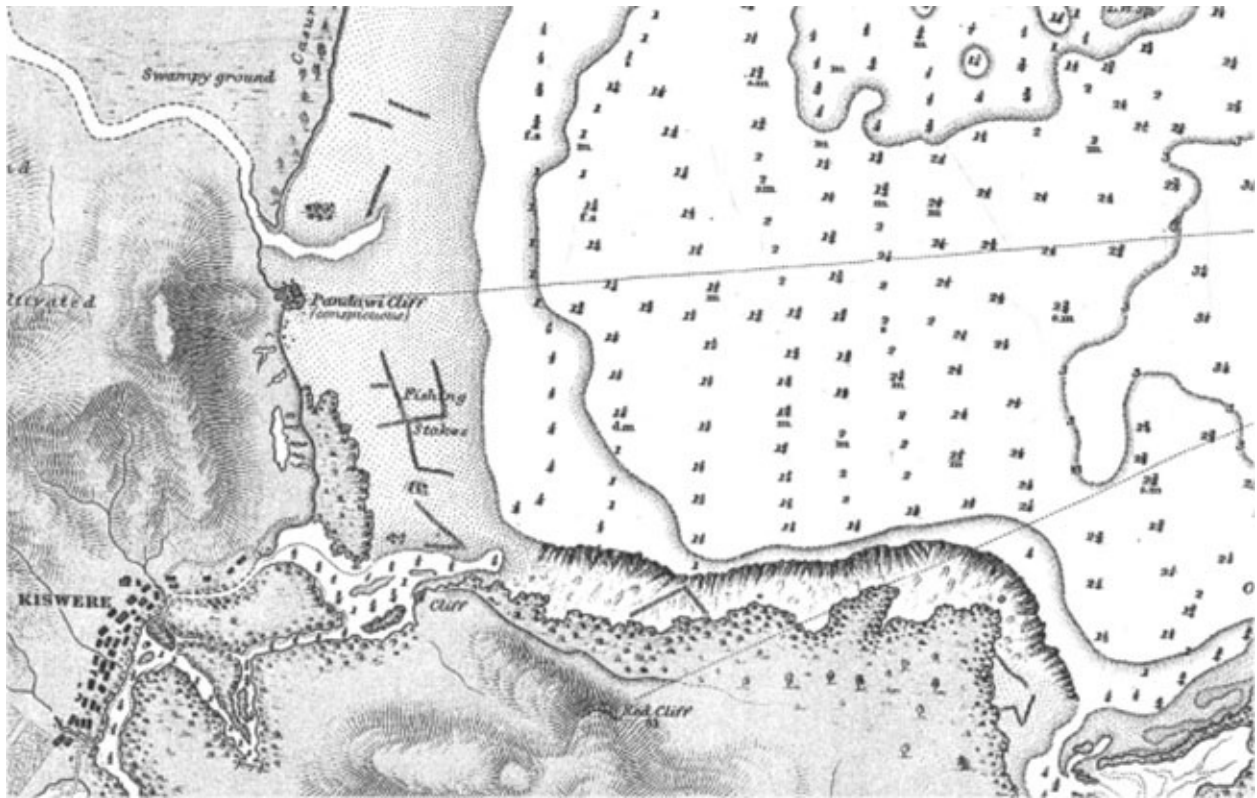
This complex environment has traditionally provided numerous resources for human use. Those currently exploited include fish, salt, mangrove wood, coral, seaweed and coconuts, but these are evident, too, in the historical and archaeological record. The Classical document *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* mentions coconut copra or oil and tortoise shell as exports. It describes turtles being caught from small sewn boats and a form of fish-trap basket (Allen 2005: 60). Coconut husk is traditionally used to make coir for rope or string, used in rigging, stitching vessel planks and binding fish traps. The husk is buried under sand and a covering of rocks in the intertidal zone for micro-organisms to break down the connective tissues so the fibres remain (Richmond 1997: 21). At Angoche, Mozambique, the husk is tied within a bundle of sticks or placed across streams in the soft mud among the mangroves, due to the lack of stones on these unconsolidated islands.

Some archaeological evidence for fishing activities derives from the site of Nkukutu in the Rufiji Delta, where grooves in sandstone are thought to result from smoothing and sharpening of the iron harpoons and hooks also found there (Chami and Mapunda 1998: 69). This was associated with Limbo tradition pottery dated from the last centuries bce to about the third century CE (Chami 1998: 208). Common marine artefacts in late first- and early second-millennium ports such as Mpiji, Kaole, Unguja Ukuu and Kilwa Kisiwani on the Tanzanian coast (and further north at Manda and Shanga in the Lamu Archipelago, and south at Mahilaka on Madagascar) (Map 1, p. xxii), comprise iron and copper hooks, fishbone, lead net-sinkers or line weights (Chittick 1974: 439, 456, 1984: 207; Chami 1994: 53, 57; Horton 1996: 362, 367; Radimilahy 1998: 181–7; Juma 2004: 122, 129; Pollard 2008b: 177, 183–8). Wright (1984: 49, 51) noted that fishbone on ninth–tenth-century Comoros sites mostly came from fishing around coral reefs, using nets, hook and line, and spears. This is similar to twelfth–fourteenth-century Kizimkazi Dimbani on Unguja (Zanzibar Island), and Shanga, although some fish from the latter were associated with mangrove and estuarine environments (Horton 1996: 379–80; Van Neer 2001: 392–3). Shark and barracuda were also exploited at Shanga from the twelfth century, whereas dugong was exploited from c. the eighth–fourteenth centuries (Horton 1996: 386). Turtle and possibly crab were also recorded at Kizimkazi as forming part of the diet, while cowries had a more ornamental role or commercial value (Van Neer 2001: 386–7).

Fishing ethnographies

Fishing techniques are often difficult to detect archaeologically due to the ephemeral nature of equipment formed from wood and cord. Nevertheless, historical references indicate the longevity of techniques that persist to the present day. Such traditional fishing methods in the intertidal zone include the use of fish-trap baskets, made of wooden strips lashed together in a hexagonal shape, up to 1.5 m in diameter (Richmond 1997: 24). Additionally, fish-trap fences are employed: made of stakes connected by wickerwork or a close arrangement of sticks tied together. They are mostly found on the seaward side of mangroves, trapping fish as the tide retreats. Maganbani near Kaole, and Kiswere to the south of Kilwa, show remains of old wooden fish-trap fences at the low water mark (LWM) of the sand flats. Fish-trap fences in these same locations can be seen in the nineteenth-century Admiralty chart ([Figure 3.1](#)).

Nets are also employed, varying according to the environment. Gill nets consist of a long sheet of netting weighted along the bottom edge and with floats along the top. On the fringing reef coast these are the most common form of fish netting, near the reef flat of a shallow lagoon where the lagoon drains down to the LWM. Other types are the *juya* and *kutanda dagaa* that are more used in sandy areas. The *juya* net is hauled in during low tide after leaving it for several hours at sea. *Kutanda dagaa* is the method where a net or cloth is dragged around at low tide. Women and children catch small fish on the reefs and beach along with shellfish and sea cucumbers at low tide, and men collect shellfish for bait (Prins 1965: 135). A different type of fish trap was recorded in the Mbegani Estuary near Bwembweni where fish are trapped as the tide goes out of the Nyanza River by a dam built of estuarine sediments and sand bags ([Figure 3.2](#)).



[Figure 3.1](#) Fish-trap fences marked as fishing stakes on Admiralty chart in Kiswere Harbour (Gray 1874)

(Source: UKHO, not to be used for navigation)

In many respects small-scale fishing activities have changed little to the present time. Structures at traditional subsistence ports are rudimentary, consisting of huts of grass on wooden frames, providing shelter and storage of equipment at the high water mark (HWM). Along with small vessels including canoes, outrigger canoes and small dhows, material evidence can include wooden supports for boat building and repair, spare masts, hearths and shell middens. The smallest ports are often no more than temporary camps that store materials – nets, mangrove poles, fish-trap baskets, wicker frames for fish-trap fences wrapped in coils – above the HWM. Structural elements include huts and fish-drying racks. Traces are sometimes visible in archaeological investigation of the backshore in the form of post-holes (Pollard 2008a: 275), although the presumed use also of coconut frond mats, pliable mangrove sticks and coir rope is a limiting factor in survival.

Craft, construction and industrial resources

Fish-drying represents the most basic of processes in the treatment of marine resources. This is done in the present day on a mat or above the ground on a fish-drying rack in Tanzania, but drying of *lipara* (juvenile fish) on the bare sand and hanging large fish from a pole was observed in Angoche in Mozambique. Treatment of readily available materials

in archaeological deposits includes shell-working that could have been for personal ornament but, similar to cowries, could have been used for trade (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013: 1,159). Also, shell impressions can be used as decoration on pottery (Wright 1984: 25). Fishing artefacts are often found in association with seashells and, especially in the first millennium, ‘bead’ grinders and shell beads. The shell beads from Manda and Kaole Village include roughly fashioned, pierced and unpierced blanks indicating local manufacture (Chittick 1984: 183; Pollard 2008b: 187). Horton (1996: 323) recorded disc and tubular shell beads dating from 750–1100 CE, using in particular the gastropod *Anadara*. However, many of the shell beads identified from Kaole Village are Giant African Land Snail (*Achatina*), not marine shell (E. Wilmsen, personal communication). Chittick (1974: 473) says, although rare, shell beads continued to be made until the sixteenth century. ‘Bead’ grinders can be made of sandstone, *Porites* coral, river pebbles, quartz, coral limestone and local and imported pottery (Chittick 1974: 414–15; Horton 1996: 323). It is likely that these grinders were also used to produce rubbing sherds (small disks for various uses), spindle whorls and for polishing iron objects.

p.39

Apart from daily use in cooking, the coastal wood resources of eastern Africa were a rich source of materials for both construction and trade (see Walshaw and Stoetzel, this volume). The ubiquitous coconut palm provided food, timber, alcohol (through sap fermentation), oil and rope (Dharani 2002: 288). Various woods such as the casuarina were indispensable for boat-building and repair of local and trading vessels. Above all, different types of mangrove wood satisfied demand for some dyes, medicines, fuel for cooking and burning in lime and iron production and, most importantly, termite-resistant wood for building ([Table 3.1](#)). Mangroves were recorded in eastern Africa during Classical times, as the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* refers to ‘the large laurel grove’ in Somalia; laurel and olive trees growing in salty water was the usual Greek description of mangroves around the Red Sea and Gulf. The uses mentioned at that time were for building huts, making musical instruments, food for cattle, and medicine (Schneider 2011). Historical sources indicate that mangrove poles were a major export from the east African coast to the Persian Gulf around the end of the first millennium AD (Trimingham 1975: 132). The twentieth-century traveller Alan Villiers (1940: 155) recorded that the dimensions of rooms in Arabia were dependent on the size of mangrove roofing poles cut in eastern Africa. Ibn Hawqal, a traveller and geographer of the tenth century, noted that merchant and ship owners’ residences of Sīrāf were built with *sāj* (teakwood) and other woods from eastern Africa (Hourani 1995: 70; Insoll 2005: 353), while Ibn Battuta in 1331 described Kilwa as built of wood with the houses roofed with reeds (Chittick 1974: 246).

Another indispensable resource, sea salt – particularly important for cooking and perhaps fish preservation – is presently produced from salt pans in *jangwani* areas of the intertidal zone in the Kilwa and Bagamoyo areas. Salt pan walls are made from sand to enclose

rectangular areas connected by sluices and canals, flooded during spring high-tides in the dry season. Smaller-scale salt production comprises boiling brackish water in clay bowls, fuelled by large amounts of mangrove and neighbouring trees. With seven tonnes of wood needed to produce one tonne of salt this method is inevitably destructive of the environment (Muhando *et al.* 2001: 57; Taylor *et al.* 2003: 7). Chittick (1975: 151) observed circular pans in use near Winde, north of Mkadini in the Bagamoyo area. In the surrounding areas he identified ninth–tenth-century Sasanian-Islamic Ware around a low mound, as well as twelfth–thirteenth-century pottery along the creek that he interpreted to be from ancient salt working. He further observed pottery scatters analogous to those at Mkadini, on the creek edge adjacent to the site of Bui, near the south-west corner of Pate Island and adjacent to the creek at Kilwa (*ibid.*). Changwehela, located roughly 23 km south of Bagamoyo (Map 1, p. xxii) (Chami 1994: 54–5), was another likely site where salt extraction was important. Salt works around the estuaries at Kaole and Mkadini in the medieval period have also been noted by Kleppe (in Lane 2005), in connection with a possible fish-salt trade between Kizimkazi Dimbani (on Unguja) and Kunduchi and Bagamoyo on the mainland.

p.40

[Table 3.1](#) Mangrove species along the eastern African coast

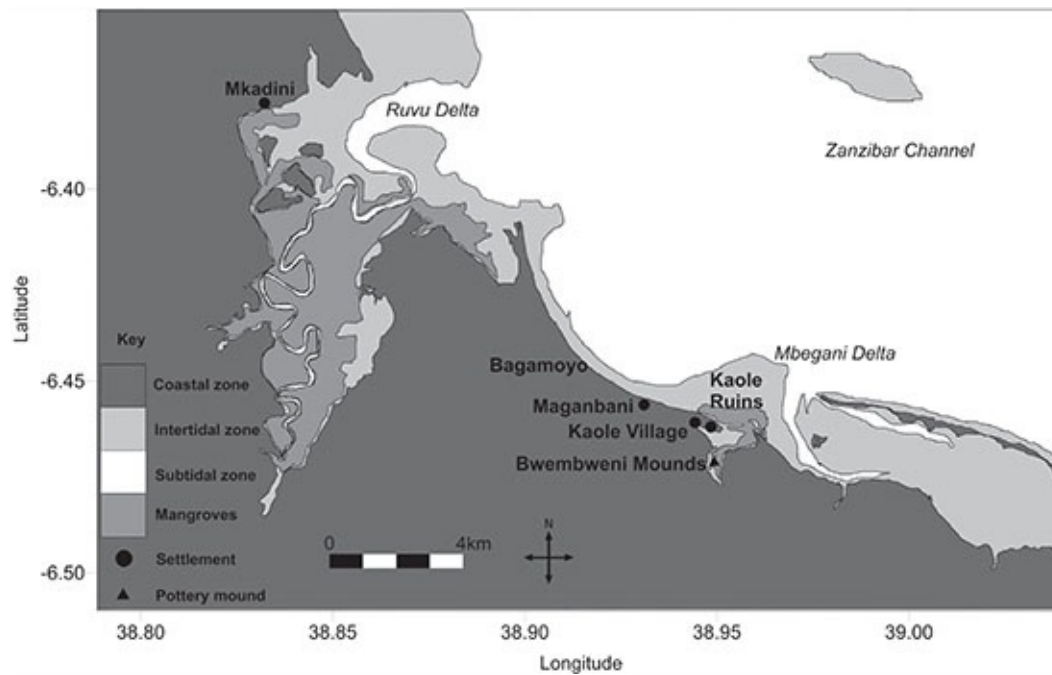
<i>Species</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Habitat</i>	<i>Direct maritime uses</i>
<i>Avicennia marina</i> . (White mangrove)	Horizontal roots radiate from trunk base, pencil-like aerial roots develop from these.	High range of salinity; compact substrate; sand flats; newly deposited sediments; margins, middle and seaward side of mangrove forest.	Fuel for cooking, fish smoking, production of lime, boat building – dugout canoes, dhow ribs.
<i>Bruguiera gymnorhiza</i> . (Black mangrove)	Base buttresses by prop roots and knee-like pneumatophores.	Well-developed mangrove forests, frequently in the deeper reaches of the muddy flats.	Red, very hard, termite-resistant wood; fish smoking, building poles, fishing stakes.
<i>Ceriops tagal</i> . (Yellow mangrove)	Stilt roots resembling five fingers closed together.	Marginal habitats near bare, saline areas; mainly confined to coastal mud flats.	Termite resistant; fuel, building poles, fishing stakes and fence posts.
<i>Heritiera littoralis</i> .	Shallow roots rise horizontally from base of trunk.	Low salinity around river mouths.	Good firewood, boat building timber, dhow masts.
<i>Lumnitzera racemosa</i> .	Small tree, bushy with small thin branches (red when young).	Low salinity and sandy soils.	Building poles and fuel.
<i>Rhizophora mucronata</i> . (Red mangrove)	Aerial prop roots like stilts, exclusive stands.	Muddy soils.	Good firewood; building poles exported to Middle East, fence posts, fish trap baskets.
<i>Sonneratia alba</i> .	Peg roots, round canopy.	Salinity close to seawater.	Inferior firewood, boat building and general carpentry, pneumatophores used as fish net floats; fruit edible.
<i>Xylocarpus granatum</i> .	Shallow ribbon-like horizontal root system.	Riverine areas, raised areas with flooding a few times a month.	Termite resistant; fuel, fish smoking, building boats, carts, dhow masts.

Source: compiled from Francis *et al.* 2001: 30 and Dharani 2002: 299–306.

Coral limestone is, of course, the defining element of stonetowns, having been used as a building material at Swahili sites since the tenth to eleventh centuries. Both limestone and its lime-based derivatives complement mangrove wood in supplying the construction industry's basic needs. The primary blockwork of building uses the limestone, often referred to as coral rag, obtaining it from wave-cut platforms and cliffs. In addition, unfossilised coral is gathered by being prised off the seabed at low tide and piled on the reef for later collection (Richmond 1997: 21). The fine-grained *Porites lutea* is carved and shaped, often while still soft and wet, for use in more intricate and decorative building work (LaViolette 1996: 76; Richmond 1997: 144). Apart from its construction use, limestone and reef coral were also employed as a flux in iron production. It occurs at Bwembweni in connection with iron-making dating to tenth–thirteenth centuries (Ichumbaki and Pollard 2015). It is likely that the initial iron smelting from ore was

undertaken outside the urban area as in Bwembweni, which is situated away from the medieval settlement of Kaole ([Figure 3.2](#)).

p.41



[Figure 3.2](#) Sites in the Bagamoyo area



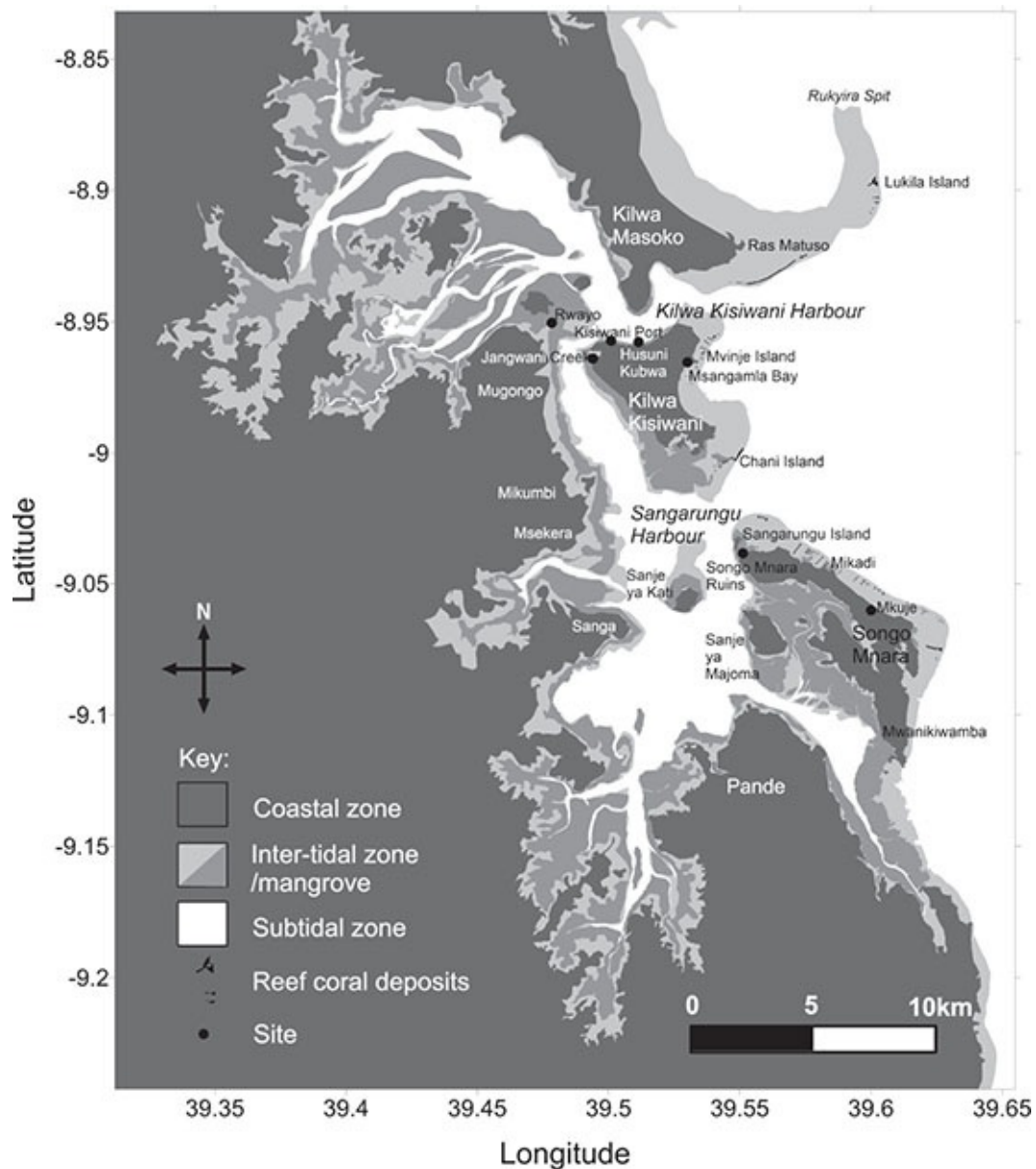
[Figure 3.3](#) Lime kiln at Ruvu Bay, southern Tanzania

Lime-making, too, is generally an extra-urban activity, one frequently carried out on

the littoral fringe at the raw material source, where carbon dioxide gas emitted in the production process and slaked lime are not conducive to the urban environment. Lime-making is still carried on today despite the dereliction of both Songo Mnara and Kilwa. Production takes place above the HWM, burning the limestone (either reef coral or coral rag) in a kiln, or more simply on stacked timber, for use in mortar, plaster, whitewash or white pigment ([Figure 3.3](#)). The latter technique mirrors an ancient tradition in the Kilwa area; Hans Mayr in the sixteenth century described the lime-making process whereby: ‘large logs of wood are piled in a circle and inside them coral limestone is placed; then the wood is burnt’ (Freeman-Grenville 1962: 107). This method is ongoing in the Kilwa area today, though shellfish may substitute for coral on sandier coasts.

p.42

Indications of an important lime industry, along Kilwa Kisiwani’s east coast in the medieval period, derive from substantial collections of reef coral and evidence of lime-making discovered in excavations on Mvinje Island and Msangamla Bay (Pollard 2008a: 274–5) ([Figure 3.4](#)). Undecorated pottery, fishbone, animal bone and shellfish within the same context at Mvinje Island Cave, and pottery found among reef materials at Kilwa, all dated to the fourteenth– sixteenth century, suggest exploitation of these resources during Kilwa’s prosperous phase (*ibid.*).



[Figure 3.4](#) Kilwa rias showing places mentioned in the text

At Kilwa Kisiwani, Chittick's (1974: 39–40) excavations exposed twelfth-century lime kilns, and comparable pits have been located at Songo Mnara (Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2012: 193–4). Chittick (1974: 39–40) described an alternative and earlier method of lime-making which, despite the strictures noted above concerning production in an urban area, was conducted beside the Great House itself rather than externally. His trench contained lime kilns from a period when stone buildings were first introduced to the area. Feeder-trenches led into the kilns, with blocking stones placed to shut off the draught after the required temperature was obtained. The kiln floor had a deposit of lime from which carbonised logs projected radially from the edges. There continues to be present-day evidence for lime-making around Kilwa Kisiwani and Sangarungu Harbours and their sea approaches, especially outside settlements on Sanye ya Kati, Sangarungu Island and Songo Mnara, all easily accessible by boat.

Foreshore industrial islets

Resource exploitation and past industrial activity may well leave evidence in midden-type deposits located away from principal areas of settlement. Discovery of such often requires careful searching of the littoral fringe in none too accessible areas, but within the vicinity of ports that once contained population centres. A number of such mounds have been found on the shores of the rias and estuaries of medieval harbours. Their contents consist predominantly of pottery and often show evidence of fishing, iron working and mortar making. They may also have sometimes been associated with salt working or mangrove exploitation, lying as they do in shallow *jangwani* and mangrove forest areas.

At their most basic, middens developed in association with fishing at landing places on spits or small islands in the mangrove zone, in a manner similar to that recorded by Chittick (1975) at Mkadini. Pottery from excavation into such landing areas away from the primary trading port within Kilwa Kisiwani Harbour reveals utilisation concentrated during the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. The deposits contain not only fishermen's midden material, but also animal and bird bone in similar quantities to fishbone, indicating the diversity of activity in the area (Pollard 2008a: 271). Evidence also of wooden structures in the form of stake holes, pottery and charcoal show the likelihood of a simple fishermen's shelters, boat repair or fish-drying racks similar to those found today on the spit. Such contemporary fishing ports likely provided support to major trading settlements like Kilwa Kisiwani. Some of these ports also engaged in agricultural activities, determined from animal bone, fishbone and shellfish evidence (ibid.: 272).

The Mugongo area, on the mainland coast west of Kilwa Kisiwani, provides evidence of further middens that pottery evidence dates to the fourteenth–sixteenth centuries. They differ from previous examples in that they contain a large proportion of mangrove whelk in addition to substantial amounts of local pottery, animal bone and reef coral. The mounds, the largest of which is at Rwayo, are situated in a similar environmental location – on a sand spit at the border of *jangwani* – near modern salt works and mangroves. The site is near a channel through the mangroves and would have had easy boat transport with Kilwa Kisiwani. The large-scale exploitation of mangrove species may be a result of felling the mangroves in this area for trade and/or burning in salt production, while the whelk shells could derive from their stripping from mangrove prior to transport, and as detritus from consumption by workers. Another midden resulting from mangrove exploitation is at Kaole Ruins, located on a large sand spit, which has dense mangroves today on its northern side. An excavation here, near the HWM, also revealed a dense mangrove whelk midden along with hooded oyster which grows on the roots and branches of mangroves, in contexts dated to the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries (Pollard 2008b: 170–3).

Other harbours in the Kilwa area provide evidence of external operations in support of village activity. For example, Kiswere Village, situated at the mouth of a river flowing into Kiswere Harbour, is situated c. 45 km south of Kilwa. It was possibly a provisioning port on the sailing route between Kilwa and Sofala (Pollard and Ichumbaki 2016). Two sandy islands named Ombo Kisiwani rise about 1 m above HWM in the delta mangroves. They measure approximately 20 by 10 m, though are surrounded by a larger area of *jangwani*. Large ‘water’ pots are eroding out of the banks of the islands onto the *jangwani*, and the highest parts of the islands display further large pot fragments. The pottery dates to the late twelfth–thirteenth centuries and exhibits peeled surfaces probably from salt corrosion. Sandstone is also found among the pottery and may have been used as a temper. A clearly defined layer of mortar implies the multiple uses of at least one pot, probably for mixing, transport or mortar application. Ridges and depressions on the pot’s internal surface indicate that fingers were used to scoop out the contents (Ichumbaki and Pollard 2015). Lime coating on pot fragments could be interpreted as making vessels more watertight, perhaps for storage or transport. Their location close to a stream draining a mangrove forest suggests that the pot could be used for carrying water from this fresh-water site. In addition, mortar layers on other pots suggest mortar was being made here, again using some saline-free water and prior to transport to settlements in the bay or to trading vessels.

p.44

A broader range of industrial activity is suggested by the site of Bwembweni Mounds, whose location 1.1 km upstream suggests an association with the important thirteenth–sixteenth settlement of Kaole Ruins in the Mbegani Delta. The mounds show similarities with Ombo Kisiwani but are more substantial, and are a potential site of significant industrial activity associated with the more important settlements in the area. The site was discovered by pottery eroding out of one of five artificial mounds onto the surrounding mangrove swamp and *jangwani* (Pollard 2008b: 164–7). Areas differed from c. 30–50 m in diameter and 2–5 m in height. Excavation revealed large vessels with neck restrictions, thinning to the rim and limited decoration of rough incisions, red burnishing and neck punctuation dating to the tenth–thirteenth centuries. As at Ombo Kisiwani, finds at Bwembweni included sandstone, mangrove whelk and other shells, and pot fragments exhibiting splitting on both outer and inner surfaces due to salt corrosion. Some pots had mortar attaching usually to the inside surface, again implying use for mixing and/or transport.

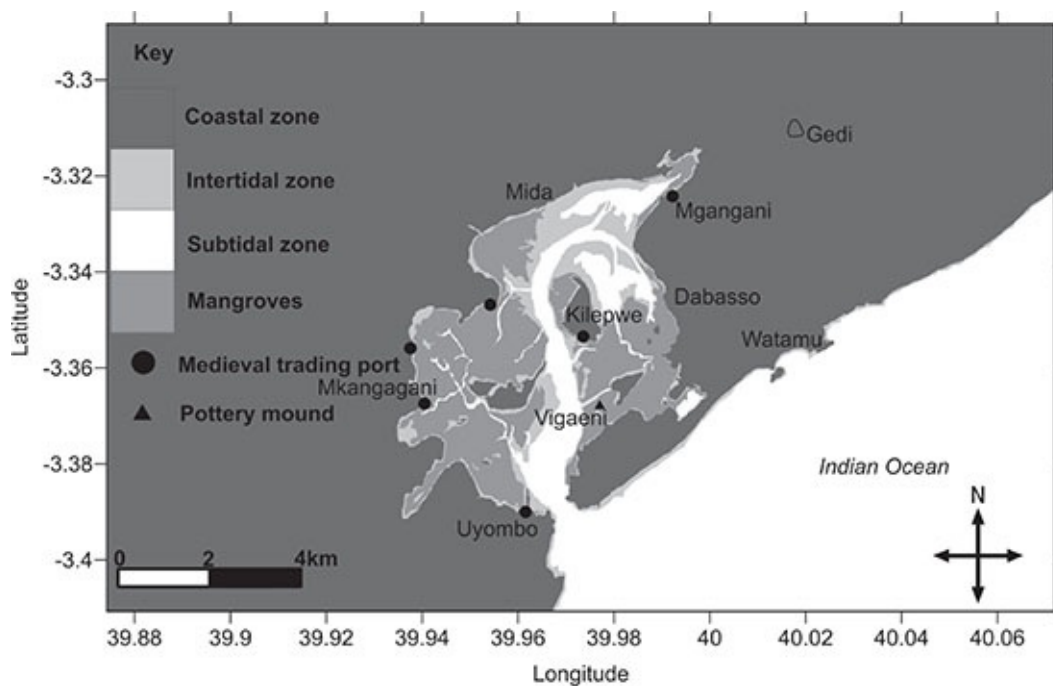
Industrial activity was taken further at Bwembweni through iron production. A smelting furnace consisting of a horseshoe-shaped crucible associated with stake holes and postholes was recorded in one excavation (Pollard 2008b: 177). Orange staining of the surrounding soil provided further evidence of iron. Lime in the immediate vicinity might be associated with flux for use in ore smelting. Regrettably, Bwembweni has been subject to only limited excavation, but its extent, and volume and range of material, points to

extensive industrial activity on the water margin at a distance from the main Kaole settlements ([Figure 3.2](#) above).

It is to be expected that the economy of other once important settlements would have likewise encompassed industrial activity similarly located on the backshore. One such prospect for investigation is Mida Creek in Kenya, an area associated with the settlements of Gedi and Malindi ([Figure 3.5](#)). A preliminary exploration has identified Vigaeni Mound located, like Bwembweni Mounds, within mangroves about 50 m from the head of a channel. Vigaeni Mound is a midden composed of late medieval pottery, currently used as a fishing camp. Although possibly a waste dump, it shows organisation and management of industry and/or local trade goods by an administrative authority in the creek. Surface artefacts included reef coral, iron (probably anchor) chain, undecorated red pottery similar to that found at Gedi dated to the twelfth–sixteenth century (Kirkman 1954: 77), and a perforated pot fragment perhaps for rope making (Horton 1996: 342). Two rim sherds had rounded plain rims. Undecorated pottery can be difficult to identify but Horton (1996: 266) records less decoration on pottery at Shanga in the Lamu Archipelago from *c.* 1300 CE and this would correspond to surrounding late medieval ports in the creek.

As yet it is unexcavated, but it is located *c.* 2 km from the closest medieval stonetown of Kilepwe. It is within 100 m of a creek channel and would have been approachable only at the highest tides, unless sedimentation has grown much worse in recent centuries. More survey is needed, but such a large mound of pottery indicates industrial activity and the organised collection of broken pots into one location. Mida Creek, like the other examples, confirms the presence of potentially valuable archaeological material, but equally highlights the paucity of survey and excavation in the coastal fringe.

p.45



Maritime architecture

Investment in permanent structures outside the medieval stonetowns is shown by isolated stone-built mosques and tombs. For instance, on the east coast of Kilwa Kisiwani and Songo Mnara, there are at least three fourteenth-century mosques in the area of Mvinje and Kipakoni, as well as two panel tombs at Mkuje from the fourteenth–fifteenth centuries. No major settlements are located on this part of the coast, but the modern villages of Msangamla, Mikadi and Mkuje continue a tradition of lime-making and fishing, the villagers often making use of a series of stone causeways to cross the lagoon to the reef flat, allowing them to avoid areas of cone shells, sea urchins and moray eels in the lagoon and sharp coral bedrock of the reef crest.

The causeways themselves are, at least in part, of cultural origin. They are formed of reef-coral block and rubble, and originate on the shoreward side of the lagoon, extending seawards perpendicular to the coast to a maximum length of 250 m and breadth of *c.* 12 m (Pollard 2008c: 102–4). They terminate on the reef crest with a rounded platform up to 65 m across. Satellite images show the causeways to be found along the coast from Kilwa to Lindi, a distance of 120 km. They have encouraged the growth of mangroves, making them observable at high tide.

The regularity of their structure, and their value as guides for ships avoiding the reef and accessing the harbours for which they mark the entrance, encourage the view that they were built with navigation in mind (Pollard 2008c). Although centuries of wave action have altered their form, smoothing and grading their margins, limited evidence remains of a block-built structure. There are also many instances where reef coral has been modified as, for example, the landing place at Chani at the northern entrance to Sangarungu Harbour, where a mangrove-lined causeway forms a boat passage to a reef-coral beach. Another is a feature at Lukila Island on the northern entrance to Kilwa Kisiwani Harbour, which appears to have been raised for navigational purposes (Pollard 2011: 465–7). Further reef-coral walkways occur within the harbour, where they could not be natural, including a pier leading to the steps at fourteenth-century Husuni Kubwa, and a walkway from intertidal steps parallel to the shore, leading to the funeral mosque at fourteenth–sixteenth-century Songo Mnara (Pollard 2008b: 109–11; Pollard *et al.* 2012: 52–3).

Despite evidence of stone construction on the shoreline, it is impossible to be definitive about the causeways' origins. No comprehensive examination of the *c.* 130 structures between Kilwa and Lindi has been conducted, nor a geological/geomorphological study of

any of the causeways undertaken. From a geological perspective, warping or faulting might be postulated in a region subject to ongoing tectonic activity associated with the eastern branch of the East African Rift System (Nicholas *et al.* 2007). However, most faulting in the region has a northerly component (Reuter *et al.* 2010), whereas the broad orientation of the causeways is east–west. Geomorphologically, some gravel ridge features similar in shape to the causeways, i.e. a tongue of land with a terminal platform, have been described at Taveuni Island, Fiji (Etienne and Terry 2012: 61–4). They are thought to be produced during tropical cyclones followed by wave diffraction to produce the shore-normal features. However, the area north of Lindi is nearer the equator than Taveuni and less subject to tropical cyclone activity, whereas much *more* energy would be required to move the greater volume of material associated with these eastern African features. It is noteworthy that the Taveuni ridges show a decrease in sediment size from the seaward edge of the tongues towards shore, a characteristic not repeated in the Kilwa causeways.

It is thus the absence of evidence to support an environmental mechanism, but the converse presence of building work on some causeway features, combined with a plausible rationale for their use as an aid to shipping, that a human role in their construction or modification offers a plausible explanation. The amount of labour required for their construction, particularly if entirely artificial, would have been formidable, but could be considered justifiable and affordable to safeguard valuable trade, especially gold trade between Sofala and Kilwa in its heyday. Not only did Kilwa control that trade, but the sultan, aristocratic families (*ungwana*), and traders received tribute, taxes and incomes from communities including Mozambique, Angoche, Sofala and Mafia (Freeman-Grenville 1962: 127–9; Kusimba 1999). Profits from agricultural investment and exchange permitted expansion of public buildings like the Great Mosque and construction of Husuni Kubwa Palace, as well as private residential expansion of coral-built housing (Prestholdt 1998: 13, 23). This flowering of the urban economy from the thirteenth century, particularly into the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, reflects the income generated and funds available for public and private investment of all kinds. Certainly there would have been justification for coastal construction around Kilwa's harbour and other ports to support and protect that trade upon which the city's wealth depended.

The causeways on the east coast of Kilwa Kisiwani and Songo Mnara may be linked to the fourteenth-century mosques in the Mvinje/Kipakoni area, and the panel tombs at Mkuje, all substantial structures from the time when causeway use and coastal resource exploitation would have been at their height. The modern villages of Msangamla, Mikadi and Mkuje continue the traditions of fishing and lime-making, with Mkuye and Mikadi villagers using the causeways to cross the lagoon. This association with causeways is repeated further south at the small ports of Mitimiru and Kibungwi, which date from around the thirteenth century and relate to the approaches to Kiswere and Mto Mbanja Harbours ([Figure 3.6](#)). Pottery from thirteenth–sixteenth-century date and a continuing fishing tradition indicate long-standing exploitation of the marine ecology.



Figure 3.6 Mitimiru Causeway near Kisongo at northern entrance to Kiswere Harbour, Tanzania

It is possible that members of the elite once had fishing, mangrove and lime-making rights over the foreshore, causeways and platforms. Some platforms that have been raised above the HWM at Songo Mnara have names suggesting ownership, such as Jomalambwana ('the master's stone'), Jomalakasim ('Kasim's stone') and Funguyabintimwenye ('the owner's daughter's reef') (Pollard *et al.* 2012: 59), although the dates to which these names apply are long lost. Some causeways, platforms and other marine structures such as islets are presently being exploited for lime, but continuity in use is displayed by old heaps of coral now soil-covered and midden deposits of bone and pottery among the reef coral. Locations such as Mvinje Island and Msangamla Bay show definitive evidence of coral collection for lime-making or stone storage prior to onward transport to the market, most likely in Kilwa or Songo Mnara.

Transport of resources

Overland routes between coastal points of production for much of the lime, limestone, coral, fish, salt and mangrove wood, and their places of consumption or transshipment, would have consisted only of tidal paths and cleared paths through dense scrub. Transport of heavy bulk items would have been by sea. The harbours and surrounding Indian Ocean coasts would have been busy with the movement of dugout canoes (*mtumbwi*, *hori*), double

out-rigger canoes (*ngalawa*), and inshore dhows (*mashua*) to gather resources at the main landing places. The industrial islets of Bwembweni, Ombo Kisiwani, Vigaeni and Rwayo are all within 50 m of channels draining the mangroves, so capable of being visited by canoes and perhaps *mashua* (with their 8–12 m length and 0.6 m draught) at high tide. As streams and swamps are liable to geomorphological changes due to erosion and silting, the channels may have been closer in medieval times.

In general, canoes and sailing vessels of *mashua* size can cross the reef on Indian Ocean approaches to the harbours around Kilwa at high tide, and do so today to collect produce from shoreline villages to take to market. The modern lime kilns on the foreshore are set up in areas where a boat can land and remove the product. It would not be surprising that, during the period of peak prosperity, lime-making from the Kilwa-Lindi coast contributed to the building industry for large areas of the Swahili coast, due to the relatively easy availability of resources, particularly reef coral, compared with mouths of the major rivers such as the Rufiji and Ruvu, where sediment impedes coral growth. Moreover, Mafia and Zanzibar show no evidence of major settlement along their eastern fringing reef coasts as a base for exploitation of the reef coral. Much further south lies the walled island of Somana, another fringing reef site, described by Duarte (Map 1, p. xxii) (1993: 62–5) to have been inhabited from the twelfth–fifteenth century. We may surmise that Somana exploited reef coral to provide valuable building materials for more southerly settlements such as Angoche, which lacks similar resources.

p.48

Littoral studies

All in all, the littoral margins and their resources prove to be a zone of rich potential for study, contributing to our understanding of the maritime heritage of the Swahili coast. As Lane (2005: 96) has pointed out, the full nature of that heritage, its origins and patterns of continuity and change remain poorly understood, largely due to the dominance of land-based paradigms as opposed to truly maritime approaches to the evidence. Investigation of the resources of the reef and intertidal zone, together with research on the backshore, plays an integral part in comprehending the workings of a society dependent upon its maritime location. Much evidence is fairly commonplace, such as the day-to-day work of the fishermen and lime-makers, but these are central to the running of urban settlements. The discovery of the causeways and their intriguing possible relationship with coastal navigation adds a more unexpected element to the medieval maritime scene.

The ephemeral nature of the wooden and cord materials used in fishing and boat construction requires modern ethnographic analogy and the study of historical records. More concerning, archaeological study of the shoreline suffers from the specific threat of

coastal change through marine erosion and siltation processes, and more widespread processes of sub-aerial erosion, all of which place urgency on the work required. Much more remains to be discovered, not only by more study of the coastal margins and intertidal zone, but also the sub-tidal zone that, particularly around the harbours, must be a repository of wrecks, lost cargo and other artefacts of Swahili maritime economy. Such investigation has hardly begun.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the editors Dr Stephanie Wynne-Jones (Uppsala) and Prof Adria LaViolette (Virginia), and an unnamed reviewer for their comments. Also, Professor Bertram Mapunda, Dr Elgidius Ichumbaki, and Professor Felix Chami (Dar es Salaam), Dr Colin Breen and Dr Rory Quinn (Ulster), Dr Nicole Boivin (Oxford), Professor Paul Lane (Uppsala), Dr Ricardo Duarte (Eduardo Mondlane), Caesar Bita (National Museums of Kenya), Professor Ambreena Manji (Cardiff), Dr Joost Fontein (BIEA) and Dr Jeffrey Fleisher (Rice) for supporting the research. Fieldwork was funded by University of Ulster, BIEA, NERC-funded Sealinks Project, Songo Mnara Project and British Academy.

References

- Allen, J. de V. 2005. *Swahili Origins: Swahili Culture and the Shungwaya Phenomenon*. Oxford: James Currey Publishers.
- Chami, F. 1994. *The Tanzanian Coast in the First Millennium ad.* Uppsala: Uppsala University.
- Chami, F. 1998. 'A review of Swahili archaeology'. *African Archaeological Review* 15 (3): 199–218.
- Chami, F. and Mapunda, B. 1998. 'The 1996 archaeological reconnaissance north of the Rufiji Delta'. *Nyame Akuma* 49: 62–78.
- Chittick, H. N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Chittick, H. N. 1975. 'An early salt-working site on the Tanzanian coast'. *Azania* 10: 151–3.
- Chittick, H. N. 1984. *Manda: Excavations at an Island Port on the Kenya Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Dharani, N. 2002. *Field Guide to Common Trees and Shrubs of East Africa*. Cape Town: Struik Publishers.

- Duarte, R. 1993. *Northern Mozambique in the Swahili World: An Archaeological Approach*. Uppsala: Uppsala University.
- Etienne, S. and Terry, J. 2012. 'Coral boulders, gravel tongues and sand sheets: features of coastal accretion and sediment nourishment by Cyclone Tomas (March 2010) on Taveuni Island, Fiji'. *Geomorphology* 175–6: 54–65.
- Fleisher, J. and LaViolette, A. 2013. 'The early Swahili trade village of Tumbe, Pemba Island, Tanzania, AD 600–950'. *Antiquity* 87: 1151–68.
- Fleisher, J. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2012. 'Finding meaning in ancient Swahili spatial practices'. *African Archaeological Review* 29: 171–207, doi:10.1007/s10437-012-9121-0.
- Francis, J., Mahongo, S. and Semesi, A. 2001. 'Part 1: The coastal environment'. In *Eastern Africa Atlas of Coastal Resources: Tanzania*, produced by UNEP, 9–47. Nairobi: Tanzania United Nations Environment Programme.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1962. *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the First to the Earlier Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Gray, F. 1874. *Kiswere Harbour*. Surveyed by J. W. Dixon, C. P. Vereker and W. S. White, W. H. Petley and C. George under the direction of Lieutenant Commanding F. J. Gray, HMS *Nassau*, Chart 687.
- Hourani, G. 1995. *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Horton, M. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Ichumbaki, E. and Pollard, E. 2015. 'Lime-mortar potsherds along the East African coast: origin and significance'. *African Archaeology Review* 32 (3): 443–63.
- Insoll, T. 2005. *The Land of Enki in the Islamic Era: Pearls, Palms and Religious Identity in Bahrain*. London: Kegan Paul.
- Juma, A. 2004. *Unguja Ukuu on Zanzibar: An Archaeological Study of Early Urbanism*. Uppsala: Uppsala University.
- Kirkman, J. 1954. *The Arab City of Gedi*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Kleppe, E. 1996. 'Women in the trading network on medieval Zanzibar'. *Kvinner Arkeologi Norge* 21: 139–63.
- Kleppe, E. J. 2001. 'Archaeological investigations at Kizimkazi Dimbani'. In *Islam in East Africa, New Sources*, edited by B. Amoretti, 361–84. Rome: Herder.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1999. *The Rise and Fall of the Swahili States*. London: Sage.
- Lane, P. 2005. 'Maritime archaeology: a prospective research avenue in Tanzania'. In *Salvaging Tanzania's Cultural Heritage*, edited by B. Mapunda and P. Mswema, 95–131. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press.
- LaViolette, A. 1996. 'Report on excavations at the Swahili site of Pujini, Pemba Island, Tanzania'. *Nyame Akuma* 46: 72–83.

- Muhando, C., Mgya, Y. and Daffa, J. 2001. 'Part 2: Coastal resources and their use'. In *Eastern Africa Atlas of Coastal Resources: Tanzania*, produced by UNEP, 49–76. Nairobi: United Nations Environment Programme.
- Nicholas, C., Pearson, P., McMillan, I., Ditchfield, P. and Singano, J. 2007. 'Structural evolution of southern coastal Tanzania since the Jurassic'. *Journal of African Earth Sciences* 48 (4): 273–97.
- Pollard, E. 2008a. 'The maritime landscape of Kilwa Kisiwani and its region, Tanzania, 11th to 15th Century AD'. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*, 27: 265–80.
- Pollard, E. 2008b. *The Archaeology of Tanzanian Coastal Landscapes in the 6th to 15th Centuries ad*. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Pollard, E. 2008c. 'Inter-tidal causeways and platforms of the thirteenth- to sixteenth-century city-state of Kilwa Kisiwani, Tanzania'. *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 37 (1): 98–114.
- Pollard, E. 2011. 'Safeguarding Swahili trade in the 14th and 15th centuries: a unique navigational complex in south-east Tanzania'. *World Archaeology* 43 (3): 458–77.
- Pollard, E. and Ichumbaki, E. 2016. 'Why land here? Ports and harbours in southeast Tanzania in the early second millennium AD. *Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15564894.2016.1218395>.
- Pollard, E., Fleisher, J. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2012. 'Beyond the stone town: maritime architecture at fourteenth–fifteenth century Songo Mnara, Tanzania'. *Journal of Maritime Archaeology* 7: 43–62.
- Prestholdt, J. 1998. *As Artistry Permits and Custom May Ordain: The Social Fabric of Material Consumption in the Swahili World*. Northwestern University Program for African Studies Working Paper no. 3.
- Prins, A. 1965. *Sailing from Lamu: A Study of Maritime Culture in Islamic East Africa*. Assen: Van Gorcum.
- Radimilahy, C. 1998. *Mahilaka: An Archaeological Investigation of an Early Town in Northwestern Madagascar*. Uppsala: Uppsala University.
- Reuter, M., Piller, W., Harzhauser, M., Berning, B. and Kroh, A. 2010. 'Sedimentary evolution of a late Pleistocene wetland indicating extreme coastal uplift in southern Tanzania'. *Quaternary Research*, 73: 136–42.
- Richmond, M. 1997. *A Guide to the Seashores of Eastern Africa*. Stockholm: SIDA.
- Schneider, P. 2011. 'The discovery of tropical mangroves in Graeco-Roman antiquity: science and wonder'. *The Journal of the Hakluyt Society*, February.
- Taylor, M., Ravilious, C. and Green, E. 2003. *Mangroves of East Africa*. Cambridge: UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre.

- Trimingham, J. S. 1975. 'The Arab geographers'. In *East Africa and the Orient: Cultural Syntheses in Pre-Colonial Times*, edited by H. N. Chittick and R. I. Rotberg, 115–46. London: Africana Publishing Company.
- Van Neer, W. 2001. 'Animal remains from the medieval site of Kizimkazi Dimbani, Zanzibar'. In *Islam in East Africa, New Sources*, edited by B. Amoretti, 385–410. Rome: Herder.
- Villiers, A. 1940. *Sons of Sinbad: Sailing with the Arabs in Their Dhows*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Wright, H. 1984. 'Early seafarers of the Comoro Islands: the Dembeni Phase of the IXth–Xth centuries AD'. *Azania* 19: 13–59.

Studying the Swahili world

4

THE EAST AFRICAN COAST

Researching its history and archaeology

John Sutton

History for whom? Authority, enquiry, research

Throughout the inhabited world, history is and has been a public matter, one of identity and rights – and more sensitively so following the arrival of subsequent immigrants, let alone visiting traders or invading conquerors or, again, in the modern globalising age, curious tourists and serious research students. These naturally generate new and competing visions of that history, from the subjective to the plausibly objective, at popular as well as academic levels. It is not simply a matter of opposed versions and arguments over ‘facts’, but rather of the different social (and political) functions of historical knowledge and of the ways that is accepted or sought – in other words researched – to satisfy either indigenous or external mentalities. Thus, research into the past is never neutral but proceeds from one’s outlook on the world in general and on the region and people in question; and the findings are never unbiased or capable of serving as a final statement of the ‘truth’ – despite what revered local authorities may insist (or nowadays, for that matter, approved textbooks that can tend towards chauvinism if not indoctrination). Conversely, from the outside or universalist angle, new research methods and changing theoretical approaches – in archaeology, documentary study or comparative linguistics, for instance – may amplify the information at hand and correct details, and sometimes promote exciting, even revolutionary, revisions of previously received interpretations. But such revisionists can never claim to be setting a ‘true’ or ‘complete’ history; at best it can be only the latest fashionable and intellectual feat, History itself remaining intangible, a matter of interpretation, debate and relevance moving with the times.

The eastern African coast and the people who are commonly known as Swahili – but who generally prefer other ways of identifying themselves – present an unusually poignant

case of contrasting approaches to History or 'histories'. On the one side these consist of accounts told orally with an air of authority, or eventually written in chronicle form to serve local notions of ancestry, a frequent theme being an original migration from places of fame in the Arab-Persian Gulf during the early centuries of Islam. For a different angle, one can turn to external observations and enquiry, from the superficial to the scholarly, extending from basic topography to anthropology, linguistics and occasionally archaeology (whenever allusions to towns or individual structures figure in the literature). As documents or 'historical texts', some of them surviving only in later digests and translations, these are often treated simply as 'sources' for 'facts' and supposedly 'objective' geographical information current at various periods. They are more than that; they constitute part of the historiography in themselves and of the constantly developing, yet inevitably selective and subjective, quest for knowledge. That means treating them in their own right as central to the history, and doubly valuable in revealing the biases of their age and the individual slants of their authorship.

p.54

This chapter surveys the historiography (and archaeo-historiography) of the eastern African coast and the Swahili people, and examines how the accumulated knowledge derived from surviving written accounts spaced over the last two millennia can be correlated with more recent research in ethnography, linguistics and especially archaeology, the last ranging from monumental stone structures – medieval mosques and palaces, Portuguese and Omani forts – to less spectacular but potentially informative sites.

The documentation is highly variable in purpose, style, coverage and reliability, let alone interpretation, and is almost entirely of external provenance, being mostly written in Arabic until 1500, with Portuguese and other European materials appearing after that. Although much of the information collected was clearly gained from local informants, the bias of outsiders' reporting is always detectable and occasionally blatant. The Swahili voice itself is only rarely heard.

The coast before the Swahili

Early descriptions of this coast – known in the first millennium AD as Azania or Zanj – are of course entirely external. The first extant text, known as the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, was compiled in Greek in the mid-first century in Egypt, that being the south-easterly province of the Roman Empire with access to the Indian Ocean, gained through sailing the length of the Red Sea. This document is a remarkably consistent and precise account of both sides of the Ocean, rounding the southern end of India in one direction and, on the other, reaching a place called Rhapta on the African (Azanian) coast (Casson 1989). The information on Azania and its produce – ivory, rhino-horn and marine and turtle-

shells – looks a touch vaguer than for the Red Sea, South Arabia and India, suggesting that intelligence for this offshoot of trade may have been gleaned from other mariners conversant with that route. Either way, the *Periplus* was clearly intended to be as comprehensive, accurate and useful as possible, and has the air of a commissioned report, but maybe as guarded knowledge intended for limited distribution rather than a travel guide available to any sailor or rival adventurer.

Copies of the *Periplus* seem not to have circulated through the Roman Empire (and the original Greek text survives in a single copy by a medieval Byzantine scribe). Had Pliny (the Elder) in Italy seen the document while composing his *Natural History* only a few years after, he would doubtless have included something about the Azanian coast with his other information on the distant ‘Orient’. In the next century, however, Claudius Ptolemy, composing his *Geography* in Alexandria, did name Azania and included details, some complementing those in the *Periplus*, others, particularly on the position of Rhapta, appearing to conflict somewhat. Ptolemy’s sources and informants clearly had access to some of the same body of information reaching Egypt, but not to the *Periplus* text itself.

Despite a protracted hiatus in surviving documentary allusions to the ‘Zanj’, the name’s reappearance in ninth- and tenth-century Arabic texts is a striking indication of continuity. Since the connotation of ‘Zanj’ came to mean not merely Africans but also slaves – such as those put to producing salt and working plantations in lower Iraq (to feed the Abbasid armies *inter alia*) – one has to assume a massive operation of transporting these Zanj across the Arabian Sea and into the Persian Gulf, thus swelling the slave population before the famous revolts of the later ninth century. By that point there had been a revival in trading other commodities from eastern Africa, notably ivory available along the coast and gold from Zimbabwe. Equally important, if less documented, would have been mangrove poles from the inter-tidal zone and other timber required for urban development on both sides of the Gulf as well as ship-building.

p.55

Swahili: eastern Africa facing the medieval Islamic world

From the tenth century onwards surviving Arabic documentation includes direct allusions to trading voyages from Oman and the Persian Gulf to eastern Africa. But, in marked contrast to the Roman-period *Periplus*, these random travellers’ accounts and ‘geographies’ are typically discursive if not literary in style. While this gives plenty of rein for textual commentary by Arabists, it can be less than ideal as evidence for archaeologists yearning for precise data, including identification of places mentioned for individual harbours and even whole regions. But, of course, the purpose of these texts was not to serve historians of later centuries. Thus, arguments over whether al-Masudi in the early tenth century, to

take an example, actually travelled by sea himself to the ‘land of the Zanj’ and learned there, in places such as Qanbalu (on Pemba Island?), of the ‘gold and other wonderful things’ being brought from Sofala far to the south (beyond the Zambezi), or whether, instead, he composed his account simply by listening to sailors’ stories in the harbours of Oman and the Gulf, may not have worried readers of his time, essential though the question would seem to any modern scholar trying to assess his testimony as ‘evidence’.

All of these medieval Arabic texts relied on research, in the sense of intelligent observation and diligent enquiry, whether direct or second-hand, even if they would not pass the critical methodological tests of the current age of scholarship. This applies equally to genuinely eye-witness accounts. Notable here is Ibn Battuta, a young wandering scholar (from Morocco originally) who sailed in about 1330 to the major ports of eastern Africa as then established – Mogadishu, Mombasa and, the most southerly destination, Kilwa – and recorded his random memories and (not necessarily reliable) anecdotes years later. That voyage occurred during the reign at Kilwa of the hospitable sultan, al-Hasan bin Sulaiman of the Mahdali dynasty, which had connections in Yemen and beyond. The value of Ibn Battuta’s testimony is enhanced by correlation with memories of this reign of unprecedented prosperity (doubtless accruing from trade, in gold in particular), as recorded later in two versions of the so-called *Kilwa Chronicle*, as well as inscriptions and coins issued in his name, and the monumental architecture in novel styles then being introduced (the Great Mosque and palace known as Husuni Kubwa) (Sutton 1997).

The picture that emerges of early fourteenth-century Kilwa as a real place is hardly complete or balanced, but it is nonetheless unparalleled in ‘medieval’ sub-Saharan Africa. Particularly interesting is the story of the collapse of the Great Mosque (notably its extension), during al-Hasan bin Sulaiman’s own reign (if the *Chronicle* is correct), and its eventual rebuilding using more suitable masonry materials and techniques for constructing the pillars that supported the arches and domes. From that one can deduce that the recruitment of the original architect from overseas had not married well with the traditional methods of quarrying and handling the coral stone with which the local masons and workforces were familiar. The story survived not simply through retelling generation by generation; rather, the essential testimony of the discarded pillars (cut as single pieces of soft coral) lay on the ground – for anyone to see from that time to this (and inviting ingenious observers, the composer of the *Chronicle* for one, to garnish the tale with miraculous elements which inspired the people to rebuild the domed prayer-hall).

p.56

Portuguese dominance and after: more ‘sources’, less empathy

From 1498 onwards, descriptive accounts of the Swahili coast became more numerous as Portuguese (and other European) ships reached eastern African shores from the opposite direction (having rounded the Cape of Good Hope). Some of these read like captains' logs of events and discoveries, betraying strikingly external attitudes towards what and whom they encountered in this strange un-Christian quarter of the world.

Unfortunately, there is a dearth of local verbal documentation surviving from the period of Portuguese overlordship. Thus, for gauging the reactions of the Swahili populations and the Muslim elite to the sudden and unforeseen reorientation of their world, the direct evidence is overwhelmingly from one side only. Thus, historians, from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, have applied their own, judicious or less judicious, imagination, combined with very general inferences drawn from coastal and hinterland ethnography.

There is one important exception in this documentary record, however, namely the so-called *Kilwa Chronicle*, which was composed in Arabic in the early (or mid-) sixteenth century at Kilwa itself and records, with what appears to be a fair degree of reliability, the dynastic history of that sultanate over several centuries, as retained in living memory or in older oral tradition. As an historical document it presents challenging problems of chronology, including the basic question of whether Kilwa's 'foundation' – alongside that of a series of Swahili harbour settlements supposedly deriving from an original migration from the Arabian/Persian Gulf – occurred as early as the tenth century AD (as some commentators have calculated from the list of sultans) or some two centuries later (on the suspicion that the number and lengths of reigns have been inflated). It is equally problematic to discern from the text of this *Chronicle* the form of government as it evolved at Kilwa and its developing commercial and political status on the coast. Nevertheless, it is the very existence of this unique document that allows such questions to be raised. For considerations of this sort, correlation with the archaeology of the place has, of course, been essential and remains so.

All that apart, as a noble attempt to produce a quasi-official history of the ancient town and port, as well as the claimed continuity of its ruling house, this act of producing the *Chronicle of Kilwa* as a written text must have been designed as a reaction to the presence of 'Franks' (Christian Europeans) on this coast and, perhaps, a response to the questions such Portuguese were asking. Being structured around the succession of sultans (disputed lineage claims and armed coups notwithstanding), and the length of reigns – though not actual dates (except for the Portuguese arrival), so that modern historians have to try teasing out the chronology by correlating with the archaeological findings – it marks a new literary genre in regional historiography (one imitated in a way by the 'histories' of Pate as well as some southern Swahili towns as collected by European scholars much later, from the end of the nineteenth century; Coppola, this volume).

As shown below, the eventual publication of the *Kilwa Chronicle* – a surviving nineteenth-century copy or version, apparently, of the sixteenth-century original Arabic

manuscript – was instrumental in exciting twentieth-century interest in the ruins of Kilwa Kisiwani and guiding the first large-scale archaeological excavations on the coast of Tanganyika/Tanzania. Meanwhile, it is worth noting the story behind that publication. The copy was kept in Zanzibar Town, following the Omani/Zanzibari sultanate's suppression of the independence of Kilwa and deportation of the local sultan and his family early in the nineteenth century, all that having been accompanied by the effective closure of the island harbour (its commercial role being removed to Kivinje on the mainland a few miles distant) and the demotion of the old town of Kilwa to village status, while the relatively new (eighteenth-century) palace (Makutani) and the ancient but recently renovated Great Mosque were condemned to decay. This suppression of Kilwa's honorific seniority on the coast was sealed not only by usurpation of the name 'Zanzibar' for the Omanis' eastern African capital and trading empire, but also, for good symbolic measure so it seems, the confiscation of the *Chronicle*, constituting Kilwa's founding charter. Later in the nineteenth century this surviving copy found its way to the British Museum: another story!

p.57

After the sixteenth-century burst of European interest in the Swahili coast, in its towns and harbours and their trade, its rulers and people – followed in the next century by the fashion in Europe for recording the accumulating knowledge of distant countries and towns with their exotic names on the maps successively printed in the Netherlands and elsewhere – there followed a decline in the spirit of enquiry as Portuguese power waned in the Indian Ocean. The flow of direct intelligence to Europe was stifled further after 1698, when the overlordship of the Swahili coast was effectively relinquished to the Omani sultanate at Muscat following the latter's taking of Fort Jesus of Mombasa after a long siege.

As European interest in the region revived in the late eighteenth century – and documentation likewise – it was in a different context of economic competition in the Indian Ocean, notably between France and England. One tropical commodity in increasing demand was sugar which, for efficient production (to compete with that of the Caribbean for the European market), required plantations worked by tied or enslaved labour. Significantly, a French initiative for growing cane on the Mascarene islands involved an arrangement with the revived sultanate of Kilwa in the 1770s, through which the latter agreed to supply slaves obtained from the mainland for onward transportation in French ships. This episode and sale agreement represents an early, and well documented, boost to the intensification of the eastern African slave-trade and the exploitation of the interior (Freeman-Grenville 1965).

Although European involvement in the region did not extend to formal annexation for another hundred years, external pressure on the region increased, accompanied by geographical and scientific interests (alongside philanthropic and Christian missionary

ones) epitomised by the writings of explorers along the coast and into the deep interior during the nineteenth century (see Nicholls 1971; Kusimba 1999; Sheriff 2010).

Such exploration, together with (indeed reliant upon) British and other European presence in the Indian Ocean, including naval patrols along the African coast and consuls stationed at Zanzibar, spurred early studies of the Swahili language, recognising its Bantu heritage as well as Arabic elements, and producing the first printed dictionaries and grammars, especially in Christian missions (see Whiteley 1969). Alongside the concern with slavery as an institution in coastal society and with the trading of slaves beyond (for plantation labour on the islands as well as around the Arabian Sea), these linguistic studies extended into ethnography, with freed slaves at mission stations and their schools becoming an important source of intelligence on the populations of the hinterland and deeper interior. A parallel interest in topography with a touch of antiquarianism, entailed recording the configuration of harbours and towns, including their mosques, forts and other stone buildings (both abandoned and in use) (for example, Burton 1872).

Before turning more specifically to the archaeological contribution to research and knowledge of the Swahili coast, one might conclude this section on relevant literary and documentary materials produced between the ninth century and the late nineteenth as, broadly speaking, falling within the descriptive or ‘discovery’ category, and, needless to say, generated from outside, with many of the earlier accounts being written at second-hand. Most modern historians who have been drawing on this corpus of surviving writing, and applying due critical treatment in most cases, have treated them as ‘texts’ or ‘sources’ to be used as ‘evidence’ or bases for speculation, but have been slower to appreciate them as part of the longer history of that tradition of cumulative enquiry and research itself. That intellectual arrogance, however unintended, was carried a step further in the nineteenth century by pioneer European explorers of Africa and the growing market for the travel literature they generated, with all its selectivity, prejudices and boastfulness (‘Through the Dark Continent’, etc.). But, taking a more charitable look at the latter, one might yet recognise the powers of observation, enquiry and perception contained in the best examples of this literature based upon diaries (and sketchbooks too) maintained over long and difficult travelling.

p.58

Broadly, this external ‘descriptive’ characterisation should apply equally to the more ancient surviving accounts, ranging from the severely factual (most notably the first-century *Periplus*) to the more discursive medieval documentation in Arabic with its sometimes jumbled geographical and ethnographic information and occasional digressions into fiction. What was lacking – to the modern critical academic mind – was the practicality of submitting observations and legitimate speculations to prompt and appropriate tests.

Ruins, antiquarianism, protection: colonial governments and pioneering archaeology

It was from this antiquarian tradition that conscious archaeological interest arose, after colonial administrations were formally established at the close of the nineteenth century in both German and British East Africa (essentially what became Tanganyika and Kenya after the First World War) and over the Zanzibar 'Protectorate' too. In practice, however, there was little planned research and even less academic institutional involvement through the early decades of the twentieth century. Rather, visiting expatriates and individual colonial officers with time on their hands explored coastal sites and stone ruins, sometimes in the context of older accounts (Portuguese, etc.) and traditional histories, especially the *Kilwa Chronicle* written in Arabic some centuries before, or those more recently dictated in Swahili (at Pate as well as on the southern coast) (see Freeman-Grenville 1962a; Pearce 1920; various contributions to early issues of *Tanganyika Notes and Records*). Inscribed tombs and, more particularly, medieval copper coins (in the Kilwa area) bearing sultans' names, offered chronological clues for historical correlations (or at least speculation, many early tomb inscriptions lacking legible dates, although the style of Arabic script sometimes offered a clue).

Despite the dearth of direct support for such unofficial pursuits, the early colonial governments did assume a sense of ultimate responsibility for all manner of information relating to their territories, from natural resources and their potentials to anthropology and languages. That vague yet self-important official notion, especially evident at district level, of how knowledge should be handled and divulged, thus extended to coastal and island 'ruins' and questions related to them. However, it was not until the middle of the twentieth century that archaeologists were employed as such within the civil services – James Kirkman on the Kenya coast from 1948 and Neville Chittick for the whole of Tanganyika in 1957. These appointments with their conservation duties had in fact been preceded in the late colonial period by efforts from Public Works departments (whenever interested district officials could sidetrack labour and supervisors from road maintenance, government stations, etc.). The marks of some of these colonial-period 'repairs' to stone buildings and 'tidying-up' of 'ruins' can be seen at both Kilwa in Tanzania and Gede in Kenya. These earlier conservation efforts, however well-intentioned, were not always judiciously executed or adequately recorded (see Kirkman 1964: 99f. and Chittick 1974: 11–12) but they drew some modest attention from expatriate antiquarians and, from the 1930s, stimulated articles in the colonial press and journals.

Equally significantly, those early interventions provided the administrations in both territories with some sort of image of how the new, more professional, appointees – Kirkman and Chittick – should go about their duties as antiquities and conservation officers, with an emphasis on documentation, protection of 'ruins' (shoring up walls, etc.)

and, to a point, public presentation and liaison with the fledgling museums. This legacy of expectation from the old Public Works departments may partly explain both Kirkman's and Chittick's inclinations to clear whole buildings of accumulated soil, rubble and vegetation. (The resulting exposure to the elements of ancient lime-mortared walls and plastered floors thus became something for the next generation of conservators to handle – often with inadequate support.) But an equally significant factor in their methods would have been their previous experiences of European-led excavation of big archaeological sites in the Near East, with large locally recruited workforces at hand.

p.59

On the positive side, both these late-colonial British appointees effectively rewrote their terms of reference by, on their own initiatives and despite limited budgets, undertaking extensive mapping and detailed planning of coastal archaeological sites, especially those with visible stone-architectural remains, and their excavations which became more specifically directed to the advancement of historical understanding. It is from there that modern research into the long span of Swahili history took off, with the archaeological investigations, while still guided by the documentary sources available, forcing the pace and answering to academia, not only in Britain but increasingly worldwide, as well as to the nascent universities of East Africa.

Independence, political and intellectual: history and archaeology responding to post-colonial challenges

This change of approach from the 1950s has to be seen in the context of late colonial enlightenment, with its strong, if patronising, sense of the need for education, if not an anxiety to keep one step ahead of growing nationalist sentiment. Particularly urgent, it seemed, were ways of encouraging research and disseminating knowledge of the history of eastern Africa, its people collectively and its 'tribes' individually. On the coast that entailed looking beyond the constraints of the official colonial mind, which had been concentrating until then on basic gazetting and protection of 'monuments'. In this changing intellectual environment, public as well as academic, places such as Kilwa Kisiwani and Gede, together with numerous other deserted sites on the Ocean shores and islands that were already recognised by their broadly Islamic architecture or traditions as 'ancient' (or 'medieval', meaning pre-Portuguese), came to be seen as assets for pursuing the history of eastern Africa in the wider Indian Ocean context, rather than simply 'antiquities' or 'ruins' of mere local significance.

This developing historical and archaeological consciousness extended from the medieval and Portuguese periods to the succeeding Omani one, with its better documented nineteenth-century harbour-towns – for instance, Bagamoyo north of Dar es Salaam,

Zanzibar Town, Mombasa old town, Lamu, Kilwa Kivinje replacing the ancient island site, etc. These had been generally labelled 'Arab' and were popularly associated, with a degree of justification (mixed with instances of colourful fantasising), with dhow traffic in ivory and slaves.

At the same time, there was growing interest from sections of the British archaeological establishment, with support from the British Academy. That institution was then under the dynamic 'secretaryship' of Sir Mortimer Wheeler – an accomplished archaeologist himself at both home and abroad with a flamboyant public (and TV) profile and the ear of government. He lent his voice to the steering committee in London that preceded the foundation of the British Institute for History and Archaeology in East Africa, which was eventually established in 1960 with its first base in Dar es Salaam. That enabled Neville Chittick to move from the Tanganyika government's Antiquities Department to become the Institute's director and, in particular, to pursue his excavations at Kilwa more energetically.

p.60

The Institute was by no means the creation of Wheeler alone, or intended solely for archaeology of the coast. As its original name implied, its coverage was to be broadly East African, and its archaeological strategy was to be coordinated with the advancement of historical understanding in the region. In this spirit its founding Council – in which Roland Oliver (at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies) played an increasing role – imagined it as an Africanist *post-imperial* endeavour, as part of the intellectual face of the transition of the East African territories to political independence.

Under Oliver's leadership in particular, these aspirations represented a broader and specifically Africanist vision for the British Institute. Appropriately, once it recruited an assistant director in 1962, an up-country base was established in the Uganda Museum, close to Makerere University, to supervise research in the highland and lake regions of eastern Africa by local as well as British scholars and promising students.

Wheeler's own vision in helping establish the Institute, and especially in pressing for excavations of coastal sites with visible remains of ancient structures or tempting surface finds, can be seen as a late imperial effort to expand what in the 1950s was called 'British Archaeology Abroad'. This meant, in a rough and ready way, building on the tradition set by the senior 'schools' in Athens, Rome and (East) Jerusalem – as well as Wheeler's own experience of running the Archaeological Survey of India in the 1940s, during the run-up to Independence and Partition there. His archaeological mission was to reveal the history of the 'great civilisations' and empires of antiquity. His excavation method, with military-style discipline and strict stratigraphic control, was – in that pre-radiocarbon age – to date sites, features and individual layers from artefacts and styles, local as well as distant, already known.

Wheeler's admiration of the classical world and of Rome in particular guided his strategy for tackling more distant regions, in particular the Indian Ocean. Thus, in south-eastern India he followed up finds of Roman coins and ceramics in Pondicherry museum, as well as the testimony of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, to excavate the coastal site of Arikamedu. Emboldened by successfully obtaining a dated pottery sequence there, he proceeded into archaeological *terra incognita* far inland. That may have been Wheeler's own way of telling his triumph of vision, method and results (see Wheeler 1954 and 1955). Nevertheless, it was this 'Arikamedu syndrome' and the expectation that the site of Rhapta could be located with datable Roman coins and ceramics on the Tanganyika coast, that encouraged him in 1955 to visit Dar es Salaam and Kilwa (with James Kirkman from Kenya recruited to assist this brief expedition because of his familiarity with the region's archaeology – and working logistics too).

In the event, Rhapta has remained elusive, and the Roman Empire barely figures in mainstream coastal archaeological thinking. Nevertheless, for the Islamic period, Wheeler's procedure of working from the known 'civilisations', with their dated sequences of pottery styles and other artefacts, together with the occasional written text for helpful reference, also typified Kirkman's excavations of what he called 'Arab' sites and their stone 'ruins'. It equally affected. . . Chittick's subsequent work at Mafia and especially Kilwa on the southern coast from 1960 and, later in that decade, at Manda in the Lamu Archipelago. The early experiences of both these archaeologists on Near Eastern sites showed through; and their habitual inclination to estimate the dating of sites, layers or structures by associated ceramics explains their mistrust of early attempts at radiocarbon dating. At Kilwa, Chittick (like Freeman-Grenville 1962b) at first imagined that an effort to seriate the locally produced copper coins, inscribed with names of sultans whose order could be deduced from the *Chronicle*, would eventually, by correlation with the archaeological (and architectural) sequence of the site, unlock the internal chronology. Hence, in their reports, the emphases were on imported ceramics from the Persian Gulf and other Muslim lands, as well as Chinese celadon and blue-on-white porcelain that circulated with the Indian Ocean commerce, whereas the much more voluminous locally manufactured pottery, though certainly not neglected, seemed to carry lower significance. The latter, moreover, did not supply a dated reference sequence for archaeologists working far up-country or in the lake regions. Despite Wheeler's prediction, the 'Arikamedu syndrome' did not prove an immediate and effective model for propelling eastern African archaeology inland.

Recognising the Swahili archaeologically: perceptions and reactions, old and new

That should not be rued as a disappointment for the region's archaeology; rather, the Wheeler-style vision and externally driven approach were simply becoming anachronistic in the world of archaeology by the 1970s/80s, as well as being overtaken conceptually by different priorities for studying Africa and its populations, present and past. On the east coast, moreover, new messages were being read from the cumulative findings of the previous decades. These included Chittick's own excavations at Kilwa ([Figure 4.1](#)) as they proceeded and, more revealingly for early levels (late first millennium), at Manda ([Figure 4.2](#)), as reported in detail in BIEA's monograph series (Chittick 1974, 1984). In the 1980s these results were being reinterpreted in a changing context by Mark Horton's large-scale excavations at Shanga on Pate Island (Horton 1996, this volume) and elsewhere by other researchers (including contributors to the Uppsala-led 'Urban Origins' project). From all this it transpired that during the later part of the first millennium AD – corresponding with the early flourishing of the Islamic empire (a period that Kirkman had barely recognised in his excavations, and Chittick was slow to appreciate in his own) – one could identify a broadly consistent stylistic theme in locally manufactured ceramics along the whole length of the Swahili coast and the islands too, from southern Somalia and the Pate Archipelago southwards as far as the Comoros and southern Mozambique, even beyond the Zambezi mouth (Ekblom and Sinclair, this volume).

The further recognition of this broad ceramic tradition at sites some distances inland, close to river valleys in both Tanzania and Kenya, raised exciting possibilities of interior involvement, if not initiative, in this commerce. (However, some complex arguments at the time for substantial trade contacts with the dry pastoral regions of the deep northerly hinterland, resting partly on dubious comparisons with random and unclearly dated vessels from the Rift Valley that had been labelled 'neolithic', have not stood the test.) At the least, this was a not surprising reaction to the ingrained 'outsider' mentality, in outlook and method alike, which had dominated coastal archaeology and historical thinking broadly in the late colonial and transitional years.



[Figure 4.1](#) Excavations at Kilwa Kisiwani, directed by Chittick (Photograph: BIEA image archive)

p.62



[Figure 4.2](#) Excavations at Manda, directed by Chittick (Photograph: BIEA image archive)

The significance of this ‘Tana’ (or TIW) ware, of its overall appearance in the late first millennium AD and of its extensive distribution along the whole length of the Swahili

coast with suggestive trails penetrating inland, went further than this. It helped answer a sentiment in eastern African academia that, culturally and historically, the Swahili coast with its old stonetowns and ruins had for too long been perceived as a world apart from the 'real' Africa, as if an area of vaguely 'Arab' settlement and culture in which the African factor appeared subservient or incidental, with moreover the Swahili as people being imagined in ambivalent ways. More than that, for well after East African countries achieved their independence in the early 1960s, coastal archaeology was being regarded, not unreasonably, as the domain of expatriate (mainly British) practitioners; while broader debate seemed confined to a club of European scholars with orientalist or art-historical credentials, notably expertise in fine Islamic ceramics and architectural forms, as well as erudite Arabists to whom documentary allusions and inscriptions were routinely referred (see Chittick and Rotberg 1975).

Alongside this perception of bias and exclusivity, in both research approach and interpretation, there was emerging by the 1970s, on the specifically archaeological side, a critique of excavation strategies that, until then, had been concentrating on mosques and monumental buildings of the medieval coastal towns and on stone architecture generally. These measured buildings – with walls and foundations of coursed coral-rag bonded with lime mortar, the comprehensive plastering of walls and floors and, for doorways and fine decorative work, the cutting and carving of selected coral – were typically attributed to the elite and ruling classes, themselves vaguely imagined as 'Arab' if not ultimately immigrant (a notion that persists in popular thinking locally). Such focus on the spectacular and on external influences, so the critique went, had meant neglecting extensive areas of more humble and less pretentious housing, built of wood, earth and thatch typical of local tradition, and thus of failing to appreciate the fuller picture of the overall society and economies of these settlements. Although Chittick (and, to a lesser extent, Kirkman) had, in fact, excavated through such occupation areas, their purpose was primarily to obtain a chronological framework for the sites and monumental remains in question and, as an essential tool for that quest, to identify the external models in the wider Islamic world. As a result, at Kilwa the significance of domestic deposits predating the first stone mosque (no earlier than the twelfth century, Chittick thought at first) was underplayed; whereas for the later 'medieval' centuries the descriptions of the grand stone structures – the Great Mosque extension with the adjacent 'great house', as well as the successive palaces of Husuni and Makutani – seemed to lack a balanced and realistic context of a town and port community.

Dating by architectural style and Islamic reference; correlations with numismatics and chronicles

The changes of purpose and methods in coastal archaeology introduced towards the end of the twentieth century, in reaction to the narrower focus of previous decades as just noted, were naturally propelled by the expansion of the archaeological community itself, both local and international, and the introduction regionally of more diverse training, experiences and techniques. Nevertheless, the legacy of the pioneer work of survey, excavating and recording sites and finds of that time has remained essential for reference. But that should not mean that every former conclusion or dating ‘hunch’, based on imported ceramics or details of Islamic architectural style, should be repeated simply out of respect.

In particular, it is not easy to fathom the reasoning behind the cautious dating perceptions offered by Kirkman in the 1950s and, though less severely after him, by Chittick for sites and structures along the coast that could be confidently categorised as broadly Islamic and were patently pre-Portuguese (i.e. before 1500). Such a predilection for caution is not simply explained methodologically, by the avoidance of radiocarbon dating in the region till well into the 1960s – or by the continuing suspicion of this technique by these archaeologists who, by their training, preferred to rely on distinctive (imported) artefacts and cultural styles (see Chittick 1984: 11, 30). It seems that Kirkman, working in virtual academic isolation, felt inhibited from stretching the dates of the settlements that he was investigating because of an unarticulated sense that any item, ranging from diagnostic ceramics to architectural forms, must have needed time to mellow in the busy cultural and commercial hubs of the Indian Ocean and Islamic heartlands before being adopted on these ‘distant provincial’ shores. This approach resulted in a chronology cramming so much into the fifteenth century and spilling well into the sixteenth (overlapping strangely into the times of Portuguese dominance and the supposed economic decline of the Swahili harbours). Oddly, such a restricted vision of time-depth sits rather awkwardly with a funerary inscription at Gede bearing the date 802H (= AD 1399), which Kirkman regarded as a fortuitous ‘peg’ to distinguish deposits of the fifteenth century from those of the fourteenth and earlier (Kirkman 1960). (The gradual recognition of a longer, deeper chronology on the Kenya coast is apparent in Wilson's surveys for the National Museums, 1978/1980, and Abungu's reappraisal of the Tana delta including Kirkman's Ungwana sequence, 1990.) Chittick, in turn, was inclined to relax this constricted overview while excavating at Kilwa, but (perhaps in deference to Kirkman) hesitated from assigning significant structures before the thirteenth century (or to push underlying deposits much before that).

p.64

A separate factor in his reasoning was, as noted, the written documentation of the Kilwa sultanate, as recorded in the Arabic *Kilwa Chronicle* and, for critical comparison, de Barros' Portuguese digest likewise of sixteenth-century date. In the 1950s these had been worked through assiduously by Freeman-Grenville alongside an effort to seriate the copper coins inscribed with the names of several Kilwa sultans – numbers of which could be

picked up on the foreshore – through correlation with the texts. From this Freeman-Grenville calculated a tenth-century foundation of Kilwa by one Ali bin al-Hasan (or Husain?) – a conclusion, some three centuries after the Prophet, in convenient agreement with received scholarly authority. By Chittick's estimation, however, Freeman-Grenville's exercise was far too ingenious and uncritical in respecting the literal word, while the list of rulers seemed riddled with duplications of names and dubious regnal lengths, with the effect of exaggerating the overall history of Kilwa by some two hundred years. From that he argued that the earliest coins in the Kilwa series (and a hoard at Kisimani Mafia), those naming Ali bin al-Hasan, should be identified with the same founding sultan and be dated barely before 1200 (AD), *contra* Freeman-Grenville's calculation (Chittick 1965).

Since Chittick's time it has transpired from various coin finds elsewhere on the coast and islands, particularly on Pemba, as well as the ceramic evidence from Chittick's own excavations, that this corrective attempt was probably too extreme and that the date of Ali bin al-Hasan should best be placed in or about the eleventh century. But that could be too simplistic in its endeavour to calculate a date, albeit approximate, in the manner demanded by anyone schooled in the tradition of European historiography. Alternatively, one might ask whether Ali bin al-Hasan was a real ruler, rather than a legendary, timeless name, one that seemed appropriate for repeating on coins struck during a succession of reigns, and in this way becoming imprinted on historians' minds. That may be taking the issue to its sceptical extreme but, at the least, it should warn about the pitfalls inherent in associating too readily particular archaeological features, buildings or settlement deposits with specific names or events mentioned in written texts.

Such a compromise solution for dating the Kilwa sequence, and for tacitly regarding the archaeological evidence of first settlement and maritime trade there in the ninth–tenth centuries as effectively 'pre-sultanate', fits broadly with the findings on the northern coast, including Manda and Shanga in the Lamu-Pate Archipelago. But, at the same time, it represents the expansion of archaeological endeavour by practitioners with more varied experiences and training, including exposure to modern techniques of on-site recovery and post-excavation laboratory examination. As a result, archaeology on the Swahili coast is no longer pursued as if to verify the written texts and the numismatics, but forms, rather, an essential contribution in its own right to the regional history, both its indigenous and the external aspects. The latter, including the Islamic factor – from no later than the turn of the ninth century, as the succession of wooden mosques at Shanga has demonstrated – now falls more easily into context. Thus the argument of the 1960s between Freeman-Grenville and Chittick over the chronology of the Kilwa sultans is no longer so central an issue, as the text (and derivations) of the *Kilwa Chronicle* – together with the coin sequence – can be better evaluated in tandem with the archaeological findings, both at Kilwa itself and along the whole coast.

A different instance of estimating the dating of settlements or their stone buildings by architectural style – if not individual 'hunches' – is worth noting in the Kilwa

Archipelago, at the settlement on Songo Mnara island. This remarkably preserved complex of houses and mosques is mostly attributed to the fifteenth century and clearly relates to Kilwa itself, having been perhaps an outlying settlement and subsidiary harbour at that time. The difference at Kilwa town is partly one of appearance, since most of the 'medieval' (pre-Portuguese) stone architecture there (except for mosques) had suffered robbing of walls for later reuse. That destructive activity can be attributed, very plausibly, to the late eighteenth-century revival of Kilwa and its economy, which was accompanied by the building of a new palace (Makutani) with substantial fortifications (over the remains of the fifteenth-century palace, in fact). It was this chronological factor, indicating two quite separate waves of stone construction, pre- and post-Portuguese, on the site of Kilwa itself that apparently induced Peter Garlake (1966) – as a student with architectural training and an eye for thorough recording, working under Chittick in the early 1960s – to imagine a comparable eighteenth-century reoccupation of Songo Mnara. That, he thought, could be distinguished from the fifteenth-century remains by inferior styles and workmanship. Although there are indeed numerous instances of annexations and alterations to the houses of Songo Mnara, some of them involving obvious replanning, it now looks very uncertain that they belong to an entirely separate period of activity; at least, recent investigations of the site have not produced datable archaeological material to corroborate resettlement in the eighteenth century.

p.65

This Songo Mnara case illustrates the difficulties of dating by style, in the art-historical tradition of reasoning from experience, which can appear impenetrable to the non-expert. For individual structures, their extensions and alterations, the occasional misjudgement may not seem too serious; but errors can become infectious when used as authoritative references for assigning dates to neighbouring buildings and the history of whole sites, let alone their relationship to the rest of the Swahili region. That notwithstanding, the need for expertise in architectural styles and their historical and geographical contexts remains essential for understanding the Swahili coast as a whole, and its connections with the wider Islamic world from the ninth century. Broadly, it seems that until the thirteenth century building in stone was rare except for certain mosques. However, that cautious observation may be more apparent than real considering the difficulty, archaeologically speaking, of detecting every instance of demolition or complete rebuilding of structures, domestic ones as well as mosques, on a developing town site over time.

A separate and important conclusion of Garlake's, one again derived from study of architectural styles, as well as diffusion of exotic features, deserves special attention. This is the marker set at Kilwa around 1320 CE (=720H) by the sudden building of the enormous, and patently ostentatious, palace known as Husuni Kubwa for sultan al-Hasan bin Sulaiman of the Mahdali house. A generation earlier that family, with powerful connections in Yemen, appears, from the testimony of the *Kilwa Chronicle*, to have seized the sultanate by force, and with it the overlordship of much of the Swahili coast, at least

its southern part, with Sofala too. That gave the Mahdalis the monopoly of the trade from the south, notably the Zimbabwe gold at a time of increasing world demand. The rush of wealth that ensued, together with the Mahdalis' international connections through the Red Sea (in effect to Egypt and the Mediterranean), helps explain how al-Hasan bin Sulaiman was able to finance this wave of grand construction at Kilwa, notably the arched and domed extension to the Great Mosque, which increased its space five-fold, as well as Husuni Kubwa separate from the town but overlooking the harbour approach. These projects needed a very substantial workforce, presumably impressed if not actually captive, for quarrying, moving and shaping coral, as well as preparing quantities of mortar and plaster, and also a trained corps of masons and an architect with more than mere regional experience. Certain features of the new structures, their domes and most notably the bathing pool in the palace, recall those of Abbasid Iraq several centuries earlier – showing that this sultan wanted to flaunt Kilwa's orthodox Sunni Islamic credentials, albeit with obsessive anachronism, at this southern extremity of the faith.

Post-pioneer coastal and island archaeology – in both continental and oceanic contexts

Whatever picture of Kilwa, not only in the years of opulence and ostentation under al-Hasan bin Sulaiman but also over the longer span, may emerge from further research on the ground, the focus will certainly be different from that of Chittick and Garlake in the 1960s. Here, as elsewhere along the coast and on the islands, the direction of archaeology has diversified. The former concentration on monumental ruins and establishing basic chronologies has been superseded by concern for social, economic and subsistence factors and, to that end, the application of more modern techniques both on-site and post-excavation. Such trends have benefited from the involvement of archaeologists from various countries and professional traditions, as well as training of local scholars in techniques and research design through coordinated programmes.

p.66

These initiatives and results are outlined in the chapters of this volume, which also bring out changing perceptions of the Swahili as people over their long history, both as the inhabitants of eastern African shores, and also in their broader context, which combines the continental with the oceanic. This is not, of course, an entirely new recognition and research endeavour. But the multi-disciplinary tools and interregional programmes – coordinating more focussed research in ethnography, nautical studies, food-crop and livestock histories, commerce and exchange, etc. – have needed time to mellow at both conceptual and specific levels. This ties with a newer historiography able to see Africa, especially the Swahili coast, as a real participant in the longer history of the Indian Ocean, and no longer as a side-line or mere cultural recipient or, worse, just a zone of

exploitation.

References

- Abungu, G. H. O. 1990. 'Communities on the River Tana, Kenya: an archaeological study, ad 700–1890'. PhD diss., University of Cambridge.
- Burton, R. 1872. *Zanzibar: City, Island and Coast*. London.
- Casson, L. 1989. *Periplus Maris Erythraei: Text with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Chittick, N. 1965. 'The "Shirazi" colonization of East Africa'. *Journal of African History* 6: 275–94.
- Chittick, N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*. (2 vols.). Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Chittick, N. 1984. *Manda: Excavations at an Island Port on the Kenya Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Chittick, N. and Rotberg, R. I. (Eds) 1975. *East Africa and the Orient: Cultural Syntheses in Pre-colonial Times*. New York: Africana Publishing Company.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1962a. *The East African Coast: Select Documents*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1962b. *The Medieval History of the Coast of Tanganyika*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1965. *The French at Kilwa Island: An Episode in Eighteenth-Century East African History*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Garlake, P. S. 1966. *The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- Horton, M. C. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Kirkman, J. 1960. 'The tomb of the dated inscription at Gedi'. *JRAI Occasional Paper*, 14.
- Kirkman, J. 1964. *Men and Monuments on the East African Coast*. London: Lutterworth.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1999. *The Rise and Fall of Swahili States*. Oxford: Walnut Creek.
- Nicholls, C. S. 1971. *The Swahili Coast: Politics, Diplomacy and Trade on the East African Littoral, 1798–1856*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Pearce, F. B. 1920. *Zanzibar, The Island Metropolis of Eastern Africa*. London: T. Fisher Unwin, Limited.
- Sheriff, A. 2010. *Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean: Cosmopolitanism, Commerce and Islam*. London: C. Hurst.
- Sutton, J. E. G. 1997. 'The African lords of the intercontinental gold trade before the Black

- Death'. *Antiquaries Journal*, 77: 221–42.
- Wheeler, R. E. M. 1954. *Rome Beyond the Imperial Frontiers*. London: Bell.
- Wheeler, R. E. M. 1955. *Still Digging*. London: Michael Joseph Ltd.
- Whiteley, W. H. 1969. *Swahili: The Rise of a National Language*. London: Methuen.
- Wilson, T. H. 1978. *The Monumental Architecture and Archaeology North of the Tana River*. National Museums of Kenya.
- Wilson, T. H. 1980. *The Monumental Architecture and Archaeology of the Central and Southern Kenya Coast*. Nairobi: National Museums of Kenya.

5

DEFINING THE SWAHILI

Daren Ray

Introduction

Though Arab travellers first mentioned the ‘land of the *Sawāhil*’ in the thirteenth century, communities living on the coasts and islands of eastern Africa did not begin identifying as Swahili until the nineteenth century. Now an ethnic group of around one million people, the Swahili and their ancestors have exploited coastal ecologies, worshipped as Muslims, and spoken local dialects of Kiswahili for centuries.¹ They also claim the impressive stonetowns built in eastern Africa since the twelfth century CE as the homes of their ancestors. Archaeologists and linguists confirmed that these settlements formed part of a local culture that emerged at the end of the first millennium CE and often refer to this culture as Swahili. Though efficient as a geographic referent, this convention can be misleading. For, although the Swahili and their ancestors share a similar language and culture, the former identify themselves as a single ethnic group, while earlier generations organised themselves into a more diverse set of communities, each centred on one of the principal towns along the coast.

This chapter challenges the tendency to project modern Swahili identities onto earlier eras by providing three perspectives on the history of identification in coastal eastern Africa. First, I examine the contexts of slavery and imperialism during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that led many coastal eastern Africans to begin affiliating as Swahili. In the second section I examine scholarly efforts to define Swahili identity. These definitions have often focused on cultural ‘mixtures’ of Arab and African features that seem paradoxical, or even schizophrenic; but these seeming inconsistencies of Swahili identity emerge from colonial-era assumptions about race and language. In the final section I situate modern Swahili identities at the end of a centuries-long sequence of identification categories articulated by speakers of Kiswahili and related languages. Understanding how the builders of the stonetowns and their descendants defined themselves in different eras

offers insights into how and why they organised their dispersed speech communities into an increasingly complex and cosmopolitan society.

Swahili affiliation: naming the coast and its residents

Arab geographers and travellers have long used *Sawāhil*, meaning ‘coasts’ in Arabic, to refer to an area within the *bilād al-Zanj*, their name for eastern Africa south of Mogadishu. Ibn Sa‘id (1214–1275 CE) located *Sawāhil* near Qanbalu (possibly Ras Mkumbuu on Pemba Island), while Ibn Battuta noted that *bilād al-Sawāhil* was two-days’ sailing from the island of Mombasa that he visited in 1331 CE, making the Mrima Coast or part of Pemba Island the most likely locations (Horton and Middleton 2000: 16).

p.68

The first Europeans to visit eastern Africa were Portuguese captains who rounded southern Africa near the turn of the sixteenth century. Instead of using derivations of *Zanj* or *al-Sawāhil*, they called the Muslims they met *mouros* (‘Moors’) and referred to non-Muslim Africans as *cafres* (from Arabic *kāfir* or Swahili *kafiri*; Prestholdt 2001). The *sheikh* of Malindi accepted vassalage to Portugal to enjoy the spoils of Portuguese raids against his rivals in Mombasa to the south (Coupland 1938: 45–46). These Portuguese intrusions prompted a party from eastern Africa (including non-Muslims) to petition Imam Sultan bin Saif of Oman (r. 1649–1668) for assistance (Strandes [1899] 1961: 228–29). The Omanis responded with a century-long campaign to expel the Portuguese. By the mid-eighteenth century, both groups of foreigners withdrew from the region, leaving the local sultans of Pate and governors of Mombasa to compete with each other for domination over the coast.

Between 1807 and 1813, raiders from Pate and Mombasa briefly joined their efforts in a failed attack on Lamu, leading the latter’s town council to invite Oman back into coastal politics as their protector (Pouwels 1991). By 1845, Sultan Seyyid Sa‘id (r. 1807–1856) had secured Omani claims to the coast, relocated to Zanzibar, and applied the name *Sawāhil* to his new dominion in eastern Africa. This convention of referring to the entire region as the Swahili coast was then adopted by European missionaries and explorers who wrote of the ‘Sowhylese’, ‘Souaheli’ or ‘Suahili’ (Boteler 1835; Guillain 1856; Krapf [1860] 1968; Horton and Middleton 2000: 16–17). For a short time in the 1960s and 1970s, scholars adopted the euphemism ‘Swahili-speaking peoples’ and commonly referred to the region as coastal East Africa because of contentious identity politics attending the transition to independence (for example, Prins 1967; Salim 1973). However, ‘Swahili’ and the ‘Swahili coast’ regained favour after 1980 among scholars whose research into historical continuities (Nurse and Spear 1984; Allen 1993) and cultural coherence (Middleton 1992) along the coast overturned earlier theories of Arab colonisation.

Affiliating as Swahili

Some eastern Africans began to affiliate as Swahili for the first time during the second period of direct Omani influence after 1820, but not the coastal patricians (*waungwana*) who held fast to town loyalties built on clan membership. These latter residents emphasised Arab descent or reinvigorated a wider identity as *Washirazi*, thus claiming an ancestral home in the Persian Gulf port of Shiraz. They produced written genealogies and insisted that their Islamic pedigrees were equal to those of the Omani usurpers without relinquishing their claims as the original settlers of the region (Pouwels 1984). When recent Arab immigrants rejected the descent claims of local patricians, the latter attempted to increase their respectability by distancing themselves from the farmers, artisans, and fishermen who constituted most of coastal society. Though most of these ‘commoners’ were themselves born on the coast, elite residents disparaged them as *washenzi* (i.e. ‘barbarians’).² This epithet marked commoners as the presumed descendants of slaves taken from Southeast Africa or immigrants from nearby hinterlands.

Some slaves (particularly those born at the coast) rejected the insulting stereotype in favour of the name *Waswahili* to indicate that they had abandoned the customs of their imputed homelands and should be able to participate as full members of coastal society (Glassman 1995). They drew on their knowledge of Kiswahili and familiarity with Islam to secure apprenticeships in town, negotiate with patrons for wages, or otherwise increase their autonomy. Some people in the hinterland also became Waswahili, not to escape the indignity of slavery but to express their affinity with coastal society and strengthen relationships with their commercial partners.

p.69

By the turn of the twentieth century most labourers in coastal towns had become Waswahili – a notoriously shrewd population that shifted their loyalties as they searched for a suitable balance of autonomy and support (Willis 1993). A few of them, such as Bwana Heri bin Juma, made successful commercial investments that enabled them to live in stone houses and clothe their dependents in the Arab-inspired fashions popular along the coast (Figure 5.1a; Glassman 1995: 66).

Though some Waswahili adopted the trappings of success, coastal patricians often blocked their efforts to gain elite status. Even those who could escape the dependency of slavery and wage labour were ridiculed for their inelegant Kiswahili and *washenzi* ancestry – the latter was obvious because they claimed a generic ‘coastal’ identity instead of membership in local clans. Patricians forbade the Waswahili whom they regarded as *washenzi* from receiving formal Islamic education, participating in certain communal dances, and marrying their daughters. Patricians received similar treatment from Arab immigrants, who often prevented their daughters from marrying non-Arabs. However, women of lower status often crossed these social barriers through marriage or concubinage

to elite men (Eastman 1988). So, the mostly male Arab immigrants often had children of ‘mixed’ ancestry through their unions to the daughters of coastal patricians, Waswahili, or *washenzi*. These women then helped their kin secure residences, labour contracts and patrons. This extensive, usually one-way, flow of women contributed to a cohesive coastal society, with *washenzi*, *Waswahili*, *Shirazi* and Arab operating as complementary identities of ascending status rather than distinct ethnic groups (Figure 5.1b; see Horton and Middleton 2000: 22–3).

Ethnicizing the Swahili

When British colonial officials took over the administration of Zanzibar and British East Africa (now Kenya) in the late-nineteenth century, as well as German East Africa (renamed Tanganyika) after World War I, they introduced legal distinctions between natives and non-natives that interpreted these status identities as impermeable racial or tribal categories (Figure 5.1c; Salim 1976; Willis 1993). Although colonial officials acknowledged coastal patricians’ claims to Arab or Persian ancestry, they considered many of them ‘physically indistinguishable from Africans’ and assumed they had been degraded by centuries of inter-marriage with Africans (Figure 5.1d; quoted in Salim 1976: 71). British officials argued that the coastal populations had thus become ‘detribalised’ and lost the capacity for limited self-governance, which was the foundation for indirect rule. After some experiments with Swahili ‘native councils’ in a few small towns inland from the coast, they attempted to consolidate all coastal Muslims into the legal jurisdictions of Islamic courts that they had appended to the colonial judicial system (Ray 2014; cf. Stockreiter 2010). Meanwhile, the flexibility of Waswahili identity hampered British attempts to assign natives to discrete, homogeneous tribes. One indication of their confusion comes from a colonial population estimate that included a category for ‘Swahilis including residents of almost every tribe in Africa’ (quoted in Willis 1993: 106).

Unable to distinguish coastal patricians from Waswahili, the British conflated the two categories. Coastal patricians begrudgingly accepted the Swahili label in their dealings with officials. However, they attempted to redefine Swahili in terms of narrow descent, as someone who belonged to a local land-holding clan (Willis 1993: 189). This argument for an inherited identity aligned better with European notions of race than the identities tied to language and cultural affinity that Waswahili had articulated in the previous century.



[Figure 5.1](#) Portraits of (a) Bwana Heri bin Juma of Saadani, Tanzania (Reichard 1892); (b) Swahili women of Mombasa, c. 1846–48 (Guillain and Bayot, pl. 46); (c) Arab (left) and Swahili (right) men of Zanzibar, c. 1846–8 (Guillain and Bayot, pls. 6 and 7); and (d) a Swahili family, c. 1846–8 (Guillain and Bayot, pl. 31)

Some Waswahili adapted to British classifications by reclaiming (and in the process reshaping) hinterland identities they had abandoned. Instead of affiliating as Waswahili upon arrival at the coast, urban labourers developed ethnic networks so they could work, for instance, as Digo or Nyamwezi in coastal towns but draw on resources in their homelands (Willis 1993; Rockel 2000). In contrast, the descendants of former slaves had few alternatives than to join one of these new ethnic groups or continue identifying as Waswahili, thus contesting patrician attempts to define Swahili identity. Meanwhile, patrician negotiations with officials over their non-native legal status continued throughout the colonial period with little success (Salim 1973). Near the end of colonial rule, Prins ([1961] 1967: 14) noted that ‘hardly anybody likes to be called Swahili himself’ because it implied inferiority. Zanzibar censuses in 1924 and 1931 even suggested that the vast majority of those who had called themselves Swahili now claimed to be Shirazi.

Yet, many coastal Muslims reversed their claims to foreign origin and emphasised the ‘Africity’ of their Swahili and Shirazi identities when the Pan-African movement reached Kenya and Tanzania in the 1950s. As eastern Africans reconfigured rigid colonial-era classifications after independence, Swahili identity regained its permeable character. Eastman (1971) reported that eastern Africans used Swahili to refer to eight different identities, from a ‘pure Arab’ to a ‘Christian up-country African’ who spoke Kiswahili. She suggested that Swahili had by then become a positive term of affiliation that united

people beyond their tribes, though this trans-ethnic potential was being displaced by the national identities such as Kenyan and Tanzanian.

In fact, Kenya had become embroiled in ethnic politics after independence in 1963 (Oucho 2002). As ethnic blocs became the unofficial unit of electoral politics, the Swahili became the ethnic group of coastal Muslims, partly due to their support for the *Mwambao* ('coast') movement that had agitated for coastal autonomy before independence. Though not strictly Swahili or Islamic, this movement was accompanied by radio programmes and publications that celebrated Kiswahili poetry and music (Salim 1970: 216). These new media helped encourage affiliation as Swahili, but the political associations that emerged to represent the interests of coastal communities formed along the cleavages of 'Coastal Arabs', 'Afro-Arabs' and 'Bajuni' (Salim 1970). They also competed with new ethnic associations like the Mijikenda Union, which encouraged many non-Muslims (and some Muslims) native to the coast and its hinterland to affiliate as Mijikenda (Brennan 2008; Willis and Gona 2013). After independence, government settlement schemes that granted coastal land to up-country Kenyans but neglected development elsewhere on the coast, reinforced the identity of the Swahili as a marginalised ethnic group.

p.71

Tanzania's bifurcated republic was ambivalent in its approach to Swahili identity. Zanzibar's anti-Arab revolution in 1964 firmly established Shirazi (which had displaced Swahili) as an African identity (Glassman 2000). Meanwhile, the ruling party avoided official sponsorship of Swahili culture (for example, *taarab* music) on the mainland because they regarded it as too Arab (Askew 2002). However, they embraced Kiswahili as a national language and promoted Swahili as synonymous with Tanzanian identity (Mazrui 2007: 28). One nationalist writer even claimed that:

[T]he term 'Swahili people' does not mean a Swahili ethnic group, for such an ethnic group does not exist today. The Swahili people here are citizens of East and Central Africa in general and not only those who live on the coastline of these countries.

(Senkoro 1988, quoted and translated in Mazrui 2007: 5)

Such rhetoric softened with Tanzania's economic and political reforms in the 1990s, but the large number of inland Africans identifying as Swahili has challenged the direct association of Swahili identity with coastal origin and Islam (Allen 1993; Topan 2006; Mazrui 2007).

Debates over who can define Swahili identities are still caught up in national policies related to land tenure and language – but also tourism. Aside from the Maasai, the Swahili are among the most recognisable ethnic groups in Africa, with distinctive music, food and fashion, but also prime locations next to beaches prized by tourists (Kasfir 2004). Thus, 'Swahili' has become a profitable brand that eastern Africans are struggling to define and control (Caplan 2007). For decades, Swahili academics including Ali Mazrui, Ibrahim

Noor Shariff and Alamin Mazrui have represented internal definitions of Swahili in scholarly debates. Ahmed Sheikh Nabhany has also drawn on his method of local ethnography to mentor many Western researchers in Swahili culture (see Kresse 2007: Ch. 4). Though local scholars have often worked to share Swahili perspectives with Western audiences, Hussein Soud al-Maawy's decision to self-publish *Waswahili wa Utamaduni Wao* (*The Swahili and their Culture*, 2009) in Kiswahili indicates that the emergence of Swahili culture as a national and commercial resource is also reviving internal discussions among the Swahili about who they are or should be.

Mixing metaphors: Arab half-castes and African creoles

Debates about Swahili identity inevitably resort to metaphors about mixing. Whether defined narrowly through racial descent or broadly through shared language, Swahili identity appears to be a paradox: although they derived a 'rich culture . . . from the traditions of both the Arab and the African' they are perceived as belonging to neither (Topan 2006: 55).

Early European observers generally regarded the Swahili as 'half-caste' Arabs. In the racial hierarchies that informed colonial anthropology, mixing blood was regarded as miscegenation. In this case, they considered the racially superior Arabs to be tainted by mixing with Africans – a 'mutation' thought to 'encapsulate the worst of the racially determined attributes' (Mazrui 2007: 1). Post-colonial scholars abandoned the disdain for mixing and offered more nuanced interpretations that broke these categories into smaller components. For example, Salim (1976: 67) suggested that the 'Twelve Tribes were an admixture of African and Shirazi elements . . . [but] Arabian blood found its way and contributed to [their] genesis'. In contrast, he considered the Bajuni 'an admixture of Bantu-speaking, Cushitic (Somali) and no doubt some Arab blood' (1976: 68). The emphasis on blood and its conflation with language betrays the underlying assumption that identities are inherent, even genetic, qualities determined by descent. These descriptions thus align with the narrowest definition of Swahili, preferred by coastal patricians and British colonial officials, as 'a descendant of one of the original Arab or Persian settlers of the coast' (Stigand [1913] 1966: 116).

p.72

The broader definition that a Swahili is anyone who speaks Kiswahili is similarly grounded in assumptions that the language is an African creole. For instance, Stigand ([1913] 1966: 118) guessed that Kiswahili emerged around Lamu as 'a mixture of Arabic and Giryama, with a sprinkling of words from . . . Somali, Portuguese and Galla [Oromo]'. He suggested that Kiswahili became 'more corrupt and less clearly pronounced' as its speakers moved southward and other Africans modified it. Mazrui and Shariff (1994: 52)

did not share Stigand's disdain for mixing, but also offered an elaborate theory of language change to propose that the original Swahili were an 'Arab creole community of African origin' – which they explained to mean an assemblage of many African communities that came together around a shared affinity for Arab culture.³

When anti-colonial movements rehabilitated 'African' as a positive identity in the mid-twentieth century, nationalists appropriated Kiswahili as a language that might transcend ethnic loyalties, despite its association with Arabic. Linguists later confirmed that Kiswahili was a standard Bantu (hence African) language in grammar and vocabulary; most of the numerous Arabic loanwords thought to indicate creolisation entered Kiswahili after the seventeenth century and were more limited than previous estimates implied (Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993: 315). In addition to this linguistic research, archaeological investigation (for example, Horton 1986) revealed centuries-long continuities in coastal architecture that overturned theories of Arab or Persian colonisation.

Most subsequent scholarship celebrated coastal civilisation as evidence of African achievements. However, they also retained the assumption that Swahilis' distinctive mixing with Arabs and other Indian Ocean immigrants distinguished them from other Africans. Eastman (1984) suggested that there is a dual Swahili ethnicity, with men cultivating an Arab Muslim culture, while women retained the African religious subjectivities of hinterland communities. Pouwels' (1987) historical narrative and Middleton's (1992) seminal ethnography established the Swahili as African, but also emphasised the Islamic, sea-faring and mercantile traditions that aligned them most clearly with Arab culture. Their otherwise innovative use of Kiswahili literature and focus on mercantile culture reinforced elite caricatures of other Africans and the majority of the coastal population as *washenzi*. Strobel (1979), Le Guennec-Coppens (1983) and Fuglesang (1994) challenged the notion of a single Swahili identity through ethnographies of Swahili women, while Fair (1994) and Glassman (1995) offered more sympathetic treatment of 'commoners' that showed how former slaves and peasants embraced (even invented) Swahili identity. Horton and Middleton's (2000: 17) efforts to reflect the views of the 'true members of coastal mercantile society' in their updated synthesis of Swahili history and culture could only partly account for the heterogeneity of Swahili identities (Caplan 2007: 315).

Much recent work has sought to correct this oversight by exploring the plurality of Swahili identities. For instance, Caplan and Topan (2004) document various Swahili notions of modernity and development, while Loimeier and Seesemann (2006) examine Swahili engagements with global and regional Islamic networks. Other scholars have highlighted the ambiguities of Swahili identity by examining associations between coastal and hinterland communities in different regions and eras. For instance, Parkin's (1989) and McIntosh's (2009) research on ethnic boundaries examined how Swahili and Mijikenda identities in post-colonial Kenya are maintained by movements between the two ethnic groups. Exploring similar themes in earlier eras, Fleisher and LaViolette (1999)

rectified scholarly indifference to wattle-and-daub structures, a housing practice shared by the majority of coastal residents with other eastern Africans; Wynne-Jones (2007) explored how a common material culture mediated interactions among coastal and hinterland communities; and Pawlowicz and LaViolette (2013) demonstrated that some coastal communities in southern Tanzania pulled back from oceanic commerce in favour of hinterland exchanges. The usual emphasis on the Arab elements of Swahili heritage thus appears to be a function of scholars' greater familiarity with Indian Ocean contexts and ignorance of specific African contexts rather than a reflection of historical relationships.

p.73

Ali Mazrui once proposed a simple solution to the Swahilis' Arab/African paradox: redraw Africa to include Arabia (Caplan 2007). This reminder that the invention of 'Africa' is an arbitrary artefact of colonial rule can be extended to emphasise the historical contingency of the Swahili – and ethnicity in general (Mudimbe 1988; Larson 1996: 544; Nugent 2008).

Articulating Swahili: from speech community to cosmopolitan society

Naming the coast and its residents 'Swahili' and classifying them as African helped overturn prevailing theories of Arab colonisation. However, the indigenous residents of the coast during the Swahili Age (c. 800–1500 CE) did not identify as African, Arab or Swahili; and local communities left no written records from the period. However, correlating archaeological and linguistic evidence reveals the sequence and contexts in which past peoples innovated some of their identities (cf. Shetler 2007; de Luna 2012). Among the scores of identity categories that eastern Africans articulated over the past two millennia, descent groups, clans and clan confederations have been among the most resilient; and many continue to regard these identities as the constituents of their ethnic groups in the twenty-first century.

Descent groups

The first iron-producing cultivators in coastal eastern Africa spoke dialects of Proto-Northeast Coast (PNEC) Bantu and settled in small villages within the first few centuries of the Common Era. They organised their relationships with one another through descent groups called **mulyango* that may have shifted among patrilineal, matrilineal or cognatic principles of descent in response to contemporary politics (cf. MacGaffey 2013).⁴ One example of how they used distinctions in lineal descent to organise their society is evident from **nyumba* – a word they innovated for a matrilineal grouping that cut across residential groupings based on patrilineal descent (Ruel 2002: 70).⁵ Similar innovations and variations

in descent groups over the past two millennia have resulted in a patchwork of terms for lineage among NEC Bantu communities, including regional distinctions among the Swahili (for example, Caplan 1969; Horton and Middleton 2000: Ch. 7).

PNEC Bantu speakers called the head of a lineage an **ene* – a word they also used as a synonym for ‘land-owning lineage’, thus tying at least one category of lineal descent to territory (Ehret 1998). Organising a lineage enabled an **ene* to exercise control over his descendants and ensure that his privileges and the community’s wealth were passed down between generations, including control over the land they settled. The latter concern reflected their perception that environments suitable for their livelihoods were scarce. Archaeological surveys confirm that most of the coastal settlements before 500 CE were in areas with fertile soil types and reliable rainfall (Helm 2000: 136–8). The lineages of the earliest settlers likely preferred to live in separate homesteads called **-ka* (see Schoenbrun 1997: 89–91). However, these could become a village called a **muji* if succeeding generations established adjacent households or accepted new residents. Lineages also relied on one another for marriage partners. When their alliances endured beyond a single generation, they considered their affines and the descendants they shared to be part of a single **lukolo*, or clan.

p.74

Clans

Notably, PNEC Bantu speakers did not retain any of the categories of larger social organisation that were already common in the Great Lakes when they departed that region for the coast (Ehret 1998). However, many of those who settled in the territory of modern Kenya around 500 CE – linguists classify them as Proto-Sabaki Bantu speakers – began assembling as groups of **lukolo* in larger multi-component settlements. In this new style of **muji*, each **lukolo* occupied a different neighbourhood called a **mutala*. This settlement pattern, and additional terminology associated with it, helps distinguish the Proto-Sabaki Bantu speakers from other PNEC Bantu speakers.⁶

The settlement site at Shanga suggests why Proto-Sabaki Bantu speakers began congregating and sharing space as **lukolo* instead of continuing indefinitely their strategies of segmentation and dispersed settlement. Horton (1996, this volume) discovered that distinct subsistence strategies were associated with different sections of the Shanga settlement. This pattern indicates that they may have formed more intentional relationships (as implied by co-settlement) with other **lukolo* to benefit from each clan’s distinctive subsistence specialisations (cf. McIntosh 1993). Although these clans retained their primary role as endogamous marriage alliances, in the context of a **muji*, the various **lukolo* complemented one another as the stewards of proprietary corporate knowledge. Today, the many words in Sabaki Bantu languages that can be translated as ‘clan’ suggest this strategy was emerging as Kiswahili and other Proto-Sabaki speech communities

diverged from one another between 500 and 1000 CE into the languages of Elwana, Kiswahili, Comorian, Pokomo and Mijikenda (in that order). However, in most of these languages, clans are distinguished by marriage exchanges, historical residence in (and ownership over) a particular neighbourhood, and their exclusive knowledge. By congregating as a *★muji*, they innovated another scale of affiliation that became central to coastal politics.

Clan confederations

After 1000 CE, communities started establishing settlements in previously marginal locations and forming a greater variety of settlement sizes (Wilson 1982; Helm 2000). These new patterns indicate that speakers of Sabaki languages could subsist in most of the regions' ecologies, with Kiswahili speakers increasingly distinguished by their focus on maritime resources (Fleisher *et al.* 2015). As the clans that constituted each *★muji* grew in number, some of their members founded affiliated settlements that extended the meaning of *★muji* from a single town to a network of settlements. These clan confederations took their names from their principal town, some of which Arab and Portuguese visitors recorded in the middle of the second millennium CE. The clan confederations shaped social life to such a degree that many of them developed idiosyncratic dialects of Kiswahili.

p.75

Clan confederations facilitated local and oceanic commerce, but also established the context for political rivalries within and among principal towns. On local scales, commercial imports became novel tools for materialising authority and distinctions in status, previously established through lineage and Islamic piety (Wright 1993; Fleisher 2010). Clan confederations managed the inevitable imbalances in material wealth in various combinations of royal and council governance. In the 'royal' system of patronage, the leader of the founding lineage – called a *★mufalume* or another local variant – presided over the *★muji* (as in Kilwa). In the council system, each clan was represented by someone who paid fees to the council for the privilege of representing the interests of various trading partners (as in Mombasa, see Berg 1968). On the regional scale, *★muji* competed with one another to draw settlements into their network. Towns with good ports and access to Indian Ocean merchants usually depended on other settlements to provide resources for trade, and they distributed imports to attract more suppliers. As Fleisher (2010) suggests, increasing competition and disruption of trade following the arrival of the Portuguese may have contributed to the gradual dissolution of medium-sized settlements in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Tribes and nations

Portuguese and Omani rivalry after 1500 CE, as well as the intrusions of militant Oromo pastoralists, led many communities along the northern Swahili coast to seek refuge on the

Lamu Archipelago and Mombasa Island. Many preferred to retain affiliation with their original **muji*; so, in Mombasa at least, they adopted the Arabic word *taifa* ('sect, tribe') to indicate a grouping of clan confederations within the **muji*. The *Thelatha Taifa* (Three Tribes) affiliated with the principal town Kilindini, while the *Tissia Taifa* (Nine Tribes) affiliated with the principal town Mvita, both on Mombasa Island. They also used *kabila*, another Arabic word meaning 'tribe', to refer to intermediate groupings of clan confederations within each *taifa* (Berg 1968: 41). This specific meaning of *kabila* assimilated European notions of racial descent and became the most common word for tribe, or ethnic group, when British colonial officials standardised Kiswahili. It corresponded with the notion of coastal patricians, colonial officials and Kenyan nationalists that Swahili and other ethnic identities were inherited. Meanwhile, the meaning of *taifa* became generalised as 'nation'. Perhaps building on the *Waswahili* identity of the nineteenth century, Tanzanian nationalists of the twentieth century idealised the Swahili *taifa* as a homogeneous culture without rank or class based on a shared language. Whether the Swahili are regarded as a *kabila* or a *taifa* now, eastern Africans did not regard variations in their identities as ethnic or organise their communities as parts of homogenous, mutually exclusive ethnic groups until they embraced these categories in the twentieth century.

[Table 5.1](#) summarises how coastal eastern Africans adapted, rather than replaced, these identity categories as they articulated larger scales of affiliation. Instead of discarding descent as an identification strategy, they began regarding their descent groups as components of clans. Rather than abandon clan affiliations when they established new settlements, they transformed them into the trans-local communities that constituted clan confederations. When colonial contexts required them to compete with other communities as 'tribes', they drew on heritage that they shared to form an ethnic group.

[Table 5.1](#) Summary of identity categories with distribution

<i>Term</i>	<i>Gloss</i>	<i>Distribution^a</i>	<i>Approx. time depth</i>
*-jì	village	Common Bantu	3000 BCE –
*mulyàngò	door frame	Northeast Savanna Bantu	1000 BCE –
*éné	lineage head, owner	Northeast Savanna Bantu	1000 BCE
*mulyàngò	lineage	Northeast Coast Bantu	1 CE –
*éné	land-holding lineage	Northeast Coast Bantu	1 CE –
*lukólò	marriage alliance, clan	Northeast Coast Bantu	1 CE –
*muji	town (multi-component settlement)	Sabaki Bantu	500 CE –
*mufalume	king	Sabaki Bantu	500 CE –
*mutálá	quarter of village	Sabaki Bantu	500 CE –
muji	clan confederation	Swahili	1000 CE
taifa	clan in a confederation	Swahili	1500 CE–
kabila	grouping of clans in a <i>taifa</i>	Swahili	1500 CE–
taifa	nation	Swahili	1900 CE–
kabila	tribe/ethnic group	Swahili	1900 CE–

Note: a I follow the classification of Nurse and Philippson (2003) which groups Great Lakes Bantu and Northeast Coast Bantu within Northeast Savanna Bantu; Ehret's (1998) term for a similar grouping is Mashariki Bantu.

Conclusion

Many scholars have outlined how the various identity categories presented above are the components of Swahili society. However, each of these identities is also rooted in deep Bantu traditions with correlates throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Presenting them in sequence and within the contexts that inspired their innovation substitutes a generic 'African heritage' with the specific elements that the Swahili and neighbouring Africans share – without dismissing foreign concepts that Kiswahili speakers adapted to local contexts. Instead of describing the Swahili as a mixture of two supposedly homogeneous identities, Swahili can be defined as the most recent iteration within a series of identities that Kiswahili speech communities innovated as they enlarged their scales of affiliation to become a cosmopolitan society (cf. Loimeier and Seesemann 2006: 12).

While Western scholars tend to regard identities as contingent and negotiable, most people are still inclined to regard ethnic identity as an inherited, unchangeable trait. An implication of this popular assumption is that research into the origins of ethnic groups can validate political claims of some ethnic groups by stamping them with the approval of historical continuity, while negating those whose ethnicities are found to be colonial 'inventions' (Lentz and Nugent 2000). Although research into identities can never be fully disassociated from the politics of representation, understanding how eastern Africans identified themselves in earlier eras offers alternatives to organising historical and archaeological research along the anachronistic boundaries of modern ethnic identities.

Notes

- 1 The Kenya 2009 census reports about 110,000 Swahili divided into 20 subgroups (for example, 'Swahili, so stated', Mvita, Wachangamwe, Bajuni, etc.). Tanzania does not record ethnicity in its census, but combining its 2012 census of 45 million people with Afrobarometer surveys released in 2011 and 2013 indicates a population in Tanzania of between 500,000 and one million who identify as Swahili, Shirazi, Pemba, Tumbatu or Wagunya; the Hadimu, a large Swahili group in southern Zanzibar, were not represented in the survey; <http://afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis/analyse-online>.
- 2 Nurse and Hinnebusch suggest *washenzi* is a derivation from *Zanj*, but the sound correspondences (z:sh, j:z) are irregular.
- 3 Nurse and Hinnebusch (1993: 503) dismiss the possibility that 'Swahili arose at different times and points on the coast' before attaining its lexical unity. The model of assimilation offered by Mazrui and Shariff (1993) describes the process of Waswahili affiliation in the nineteenth century better than their intention to explain the emergence of the Kiswahili language centuries earlier.
- 4 The asterisk denotes a reconstructed word in a proto-language. All data are adapted from Nurse and Hinnebusch (1993), Schoenbrun (1997) and Ehret (1998). Tone is marked in [Table 5.1](#) if included in the source data.
- 5 A contemporary variation of this dual lineage system is followed by the Rabai Mijikenda (Prins 1952).
- 6 The exception within the Sabaki Bantu group is the Elwana, whom the Pokomo call Malakote because they occupy dispersed villages in 'the bush' (Heine and Mohlig 1980), a stereotype that resembles Swahili notions that civilisation (*ungwana*) is centred on towns.

References

- Allen, J. de V. 1993. *Swahili Origins: Swahili Culture and the Shungwaya Phenomenon*. Eastern African Studies 11. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- al-Maawy, H. S. 2009. *Waswahili wa Utamaduni Wao [The Swahili and Their Culture]*. Mombasa, Self-published.
- Askew, K. M. 2002. *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Berg, F. J. 1968. 'The Swahili community of Mombasa, 1500–1900'. *The Journal of African History* 9 (1): 35–56.
- Boteler, T. 1835. *Narrative of a Voyage of Discovery to Africa and Arabia: Performed in His Majesty's Ships Leven and Barracouta from 1821 to 1825 under the Command of Capt. F.W. Owen, R.N.*, 2 Vols. London: Richard Bentley.
- Brennan, J. R. 2008. 'Lowering the Sultan's flag: sovereignty and decolonization in coastal Kenya'. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50 (4): 831–61.
- Caplan, P. 1969. 'Cognatic descent groups on Mafia Island, Tanzania'. *Man* 4: 419–31.
- Caplan, P. 2007. "'But the coast, of course, is quite different": academic and local ideas about the East African littoral'. *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1 (2): 305–20.
- Caplan, P. and Topan, F. M. 2004. *Swahili Modernities: Culture, Politics, and Identity on the East Coast of Africa*. Trenton: Africa World Press.
- Coupland, R. 1938. *East Africa and Its Invaders: From Earliest Times to the Death of Seyyid Said*

- in 1856. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- de Luna, K. M. 2012. 'Surveying the boundaries of historical linguistics and archaeology: early settlement in South Central Africa'. *African Archaeological Review* 29 (2–3): 209–51.
- Defrémery, C. F. and Sanguinetti, B. R. 1858. *Voyages d'Ibn Batoutah: Texte Arabe Accompagné D'une Traduction*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Eastman, C. M. 1971. 'Who are the Waswahili?'. *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 41: 228–36.
- Eastman, C. M. 1984. 'Waungwana na wanawake: Muslim ethnicity and sexual segregation in coastal Kenya'. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 5: 97–112.
- Eastman, C. M. 1988. 'Women, slaves, and foreigners: African cultural influences and group processes in the formation of northern Swahili coastal society'. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 21 (1): 1–20, doi:10.2307/219888.
- Ehret, C. 1998. *An African Classical Age: Eastern and Southern Africa in World History, 1000 bc to ad 400*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.
- Fair, L. J. 1994. 'Pastimes and politics: a social history of Zanzibar's Ng'ambo community, 1890–1950'. PhD diss., University of Minnesota.
- Fleisher, J. 2010. 'Rituals of consumption and the politics of feasting on the eastern African coast, AD 700–1500'. *Journal of World Prehistory* 23 (4): 195–217.
- Fleisher, J. and LaViolette, A. 1999. 'Elusive wattle-and-daub: finding the hidden majority in the archaeology of the Swahili'. *Azania* 34: 87–108.
- Fleisher, J., Lane, P., LaViolette, A., Horton, M., Pollard, E., Quintana Morales, E., Vernet, T., Christie, A. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2015. 'When did the Swahili become maritime?' *American Anthropologist* 117 (1): 100–15.
- Fuglesang, M. 1994. *Veils and Videos: Female Youth Culture on the Kenyan Coast*. Stockholm Studies in Social Anthropology. Stockholm: Department of Anthropology, Stockholm University.
- Glassman, J. 1991. 'The bondsman's new clothes: the contradictory consciousness of slave resistance on the Swahili coasts'. *Journal of African History* 32: 277–312.
- Glassman, J. 1995. *Feasts and Riot: Revelry and Rebellion on the Swahili Coast, 1856–88*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Glassman, J. 2000. 'Sorting out the tribes: the creation of racial identities in colonial Zanzibar's newspaper wars'. *The Journal of African History* 41 (3): 395–428.
- le Guennec-Coppens, F. 1983. *Les Femmes Voilées de Lamu: Variations Culturelles et Dynamiques Sociales*. Paris: Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations.
- Guillain, C. 1856. *Documents sur l'Histoire, La Géographie, et Le Commerce de La Côte Orientale*

- d'Afrique*, 3 Vols. Paris: Arthus Bertrand.
- Guillain, C. *et al.* 1856. *Voyage à la Côte Orientale d'Afrique*. Paris: Arthus Bertrand.
- Heine, B. and Mohlig, W. J. G. (Eds) 1980. *Geographical and Historical Introduction: Language and Society*, 2 Vols. Language and Dialect Atlas of Kenya. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer.
- Helm, R. 2000. 'Conflicting histories: the archaeology of the iron-working, farming communities in the central and southern coast region of Kenya'. PhD diss., University of Bristol.
- Helm, R. 2004. 'Re-evaluating traditional histories on the coast of Kenya: an archaeological perspective'. In *African Historical Archaeologies*, edited by A. M. Reid and P. J. Lane. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.
- Horton, M. 1986. 'Asiatic colonisation of the East African coast: the Manda evidence'. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1: 201–13.
- Horton, M. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. Malden: Blackwell Publishers.
- Kasfir, S. L. 2004. 'Tourist aesthetics in the global flow: orientalism and "Warrior Theatre" on the Swahili coast'. *Visual Anthropology* 17 (3/4): 319–43.
- Krapf, J. L. [1860] 1968. *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours, During an Eighteen Years' Residence in Eastern Africa*, 2nd Ed. London: Frank Cass.
- Kresse, K. 2007. *Philosophizing in Mombasa: Knowledge, Islam, and Intellectual Practice on the Swahili Coast*. International African Library. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Larson, P. M. 1996. 'Desperately seeking "the Merina" (central Madagascar): reading ethnonyms and their semantic fields in African identity histories'. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 22 (4): 541–60.
- Larson, P. M. 2000. *History and Memory in the Age of Enslavement: Becoming Merina in Highland Madagascar, 1770–1822*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Lentz, C. and Nugent, P. (Eds) 2000. *Ethnicity in Ghana: The Limits of Invention*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Loimeier, R. and Seesemann, R. (Eds) 2006. *The Global Worlds of the Swahili: Interfaces of Islam, Identity and Space in 19th- and 20th-Century East Africa*. Berlin: LIT Verlag.
- MacGaffey, W. 2013. 'A Note on Vansina's invention of matrilinearity'. *The Journal of African History* 54 (2): 269–80.
- Mazrui, A. M. 2007. *Swahili Beyond the Boundaries: Literature, Language, and Identity*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Mazrui, A. M. and Shariff, I. N. 1994. *The Swahili: Idiom and Identity of an African People*. Trenton: African World Press.
- McIntosh, J. 2009. *The Edge of Islam: Power, Personhood, and Ethnoreligious Boundaries on the*

Kenya Coast. Durham: Duke University Press.

McIntosh, R. J. 1993. 'The Pulse Model: genesis and accommodation of specialization in the middle Niger'. *The Journal of African History* 34 (2): 181–220.

Middleton, J. 1992. *The World of the Swahili: An African Mercantile Civilization*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Mudimbe, V. Y. 1988. *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Nugent, P. 2008. 'Putting the history back into ethnicity: enslavement, religion, and cultural brokerage in the construction of Mandinka/Jola and Ewe/Agotime identities in West Africa, c. 1650–1930'. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50 (4): 920–48.

p.79

Nurse, D. and Hinnebusch, T. 1993. *Swahili and Sabaki: A Linguistic History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Nurse, D. and Philippson, G. 2003. *The Bantu Languages*. London: Routledge.

Nurse, D. and Spear, T. T. 1984. *The Swahili: Reconstructing the History and Language of an African Society, 800–1500*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Oucho, J. O. 2002. *Undercurrents of Ethnic Conflicts in Kenya*. African Social Studies Series, Vol. 3. Leiden: Boston: Brill.

Parkin, D. 1989. 'Swahili Mijikenda: facing both ways in Kenya'. *Africa* 59 (2): 161–75.

Pawlowicz, M. and LaViolette, A. 2013. 'Swahili historical chronicles from an archaeological perspective: bridging history and archaeology, and coast and hinterland'. In *The Death of Prehistory*, edited by P. R. Schmidt and S. Mrozowski. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pouwels, R. L. 1984. 'Oral historiography and the problem of the Shirazi of the East African coast'. *History in Africa* 11: 237–67.

Pouwels, R. L. 1987. *Horn and Crescent: Cultural Change and Traditional Islam on the East African Coast, 800–1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pouwels, R. L. 1991. 'The Battle of Shela: the climax of an era and a point of departure in the modern history of the Kenya coast (La Bataille de Shela, apogée d'une époque et début de l'histoire moderne de la région côtière du Kenya)'. *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 31 (123): 363–89.

Prestholdt, J. 2001. 'Portuguese conceptual categories and the "other" encounter on the Swahili coast'. *Journal of Asian & African Studies* 36 (4): 383–406.

Prins, A. H. J. 1952. *The Coastal Tribes of the North-Eastern Bantu (Pokomo, Nyika, Teita)*. London: International African Institute.

Prins, A. H. J. 1961, repr. 1967. *The Swahili-Speaking Peoples of Zanzibar and the East African Coast: Arabs, Shirazi and Swahili*. Ethnographic Survey of Africa: East Central Africa 12.

- London: International African Institute.
- Ray, D. E. 2014. 'From constituting communities to dividing districts: the formalization of a cultural border between Mombasa and its hinterlands'. In *Borderlands in World History, 1700–1914*, edited by P. Readman, C. Radding and C. Bryant, 101–20. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Reichard, P. 1892. *Deutsch-Ostafrika: das land und seine bewohner*. Leipzig: O. Spamer.
- Rockel, S. J. 2000. "'A Nation of Porters': the Nyamwezi and the labour market in nineteenth-century Tanzania'. *The Journal of African History* 41 (2): 173–95.
- Ruel, M. 2002. 'The structural articulation of generations in Africa (l'articulation structurelle des générations en Afrique)'. *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 42 (165): 51–81.
- Salim, A. I. 1970. 'The movement for "Mwambao" or coast autonomy in Kenya, 1956–63'. In *Hadith*, edited by B. A. Ogot, 2: 212–28. Nairobi: East African Publishing House.
- Salim, A. I. 1973. *The Swahili-Speaking Peoples of Kenya's Coast, 1895–1965*. Nairobi: East African Publishing House.
- Salim, A. I. 1976. "'Native or non-native?' The problem of identity and the social stratification of the Arab-Swahili of Kenya'. In *Hadith*, edited by B. A. Ogot, 6: 65–85. Nairobi, Kenya: East African Literature Bureau.
- Schoenbrun, D. L. 1997. *The Historical Reconstruction of Great Lakes Bantu Cultural Vocabulary: Etymologies and Distributions*. SUGIA Supplement 9. Cologne, Germany: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag.
- Shetler, J. B. 2007. *Imagining Serengeti: A History of Landscape Memory in Tanzania from Earliest Times to the Present*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Stigand, C. H. 1913, repr. 1966. *The Land of Zinj: Being an Account of British East Africa, Its Ancient History and Present Inhabitants*, 2nd Ed. London: Frank Cass and Co.
- Stockreiter, E. E., 2010. "'British Kadhis" and "Muslim Judges": modernisation, inconsistencies and accommodation in Zanzibar's colonial judiciary'. *The Journal of East African Studies* 4 (3): 560–76.
- Strandes, J. [1899] 1961. *The Portuguese Period in East Africa*. Edited by James Kirkman, translated by J. F. Wallwork. Nairobi, Kenya: East African Literature Bureau.
- Strobel, M. 1979. *Muslim Women in Mombasa, 1890–1975*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Topan, F. M. 2006. 'From coastal to global: the erosion of the Swahili "paradox"'. In *Global Worlds of the Swahili: Interfaces of Islam, Identity and Space in 19th- and 20th-Century East Africa*, edited by R. Loimeier and R. Seesemann, 55–66. Berlin: LIT Verlag.
- Willis, J. 1993. *Mombasa, the Swahili, and the Making of the Mijikenda*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Willis, J. and Gona, G. 2013. 'Tradition, tribe, and state in Kenya: the Mijikenda Union, 1945–1980'. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55 (2): 448–73.
- Wilson, T. H. 1982. 'Spatial analysis and settlement patterns on the East African coast'. *Paideuma* 28: 201–19.
- Wright, H. T. 1993. 'Trade and politics on the eastern littoral of Africa, AD 800–1300'. In *The Archaeology of Africa: Foods, Metals and Towns*, edited by T. Shaw, P. Sinclair, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, 658–72. London: Routledge.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2007. 'It's what you do with it that counts: performed identities in the East African coastal landscape'. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 7 (3): 325–45.

6

DECODING THE GENETIC ANCESTRY OF THE SWAHILI

*Ryan L. Raaum, Sloan R. Williams, Chapurukha Kusimba, Janet
M. Monge, Alan Morris and Mohamed Mchulla Mohamed*

Introduction

The biological ancestry of the Swahili has a long history of controversy. Early historians described a Persian and Arab society of conquerors and colonists who settled in eastern Africa for trade opportunities (Kirkman 1964, 1966; Chittick 1977). Postcolonial archaeologists and historians have disputed these colonial scenarios of migration and have documented that Africans led the development of Swahili urbanism (for example, Horton 1996; Juma 1996; Abungu 1998; Kusimba 1999a, b; Horton and Middleton 2000; Chami 2002; Fleisher 2003; Middleton 2004; LaViolette and Fleisher 2005; Dussubieux *et al.* 2008). The de-emphasis of diffusion and migration as the engine of change and transformation in recent studies has had the unintended consequence of minimising the importance of these technical, cultural and biological interactions in shaping the region. Furthermore, postcolonial scholars' suspicion of diffusion and migration theory caused them to minimise earlier interactions between Southwest Asia and eastern Africa in favour of more recent contacts (Berg 1968; Willis 1993; Berg 2006; Benjamin 2008). This chapter reports on recent research exploring coastal ancestry through genetics, allowing a more detailed analysis of individual histories and migrations among coastal populations.

Current interpretations of Swahili history predict largely African genetic ancestry, with the southern Arabian Peninsula as the most likely source of any non-African ancestry. Swahili today claim Bantu biological and linguistic ancestry (Kusimba 1999a). Archaeological and ethnological research (Kusimba and Kusimba 2005) reveals the critical roles played by hunter-gatherers and nomadic pastoralists in maintaining coastal urban society, which would suggest that urban residents were likely drawn from diverse regional populations. Potential non-African sources of genetic material could be Iran, as claimed by

the Swahili Ba-Alawi clan (Hollis 1900; McKay 1975), Indian mariners prominent in medieval Indian Ocean trading networks, and Southeast Asians who had settled on Madagascar by at least the mid-first millennium CE (Dahl 1991; Dewar and Wright 1993; Blench 1996; Burney *et al.* 2003).

p.82

Materials and methods

Modern Swahili DNA sample collection and preparation

Saliva samples and a short genealogical questionnaire were collected with written informed consent following IRB-approved protocols. Participant recruitment took place at 13 locations split between a ‘North Coast’ group in the Lamu Archipelago (Faza, Kizingitini, Lamu, Matondoni, Ndau, Pate, Siyu and Tchundwa) and a ‘South Coast’ group from Jomvu, Mombasa, Takaungu, Vanga and Wasini (Map 1, p. xxii). DNA was extracted from the saliva samples following the manufacturer’s standard protocol.

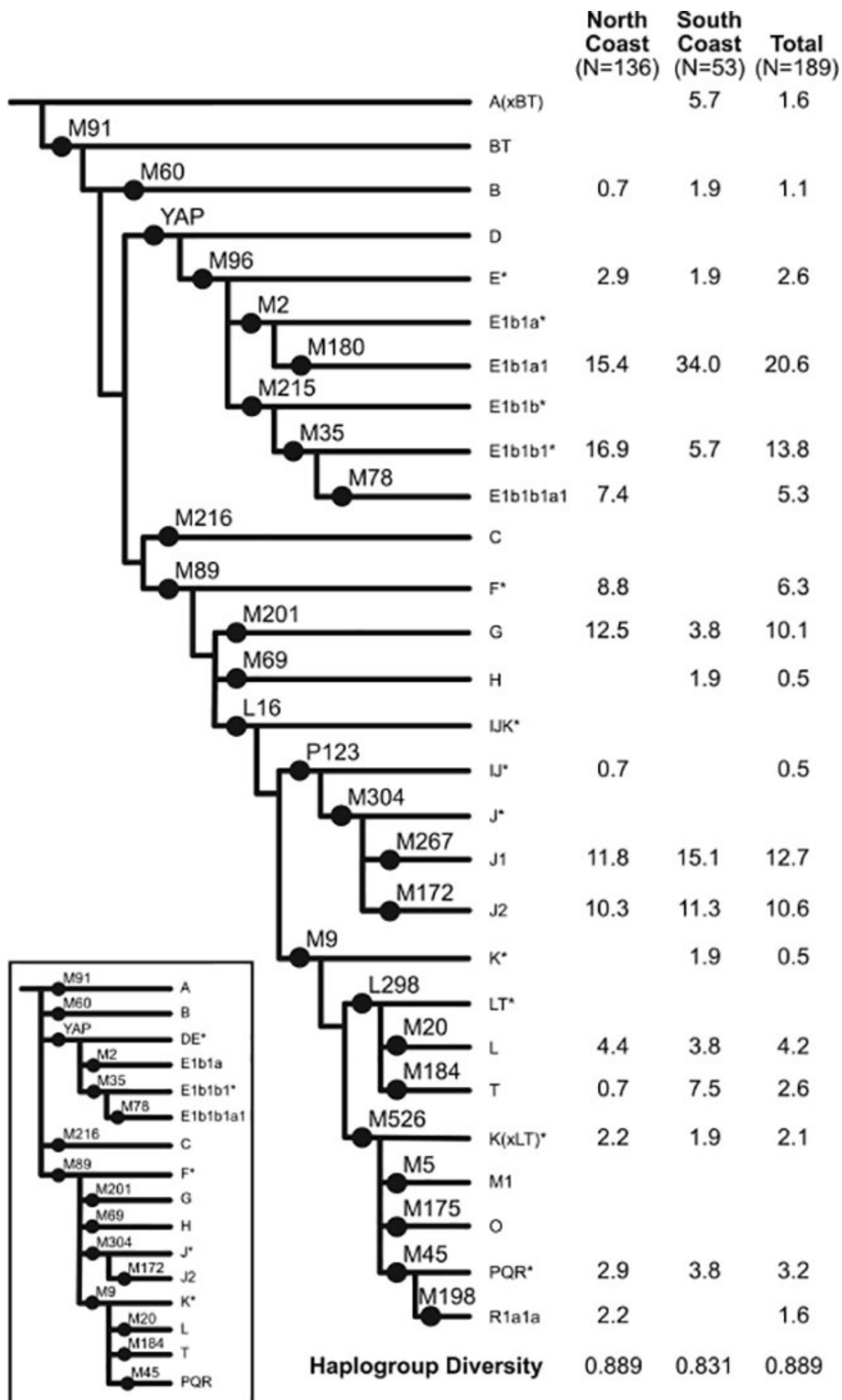
Archaeological Swahili sample collection and preparation

Mtwapa, located on Mtwapa Creek 15 km north of Mombasa (Map 1, p. xxii), is one of the earliest and longest inhabited sites on the eastern African coast, founded by 900 CE and finally abandoned in ~1750 CE (Kusimba 1993, Kusimba *et al.*, this volume). In recent excavations, the skeletal remains of 80 individuals were recovered from 13 tombs. Men, women and children were buried together at about 1.5 m below ground surface. All lay on their right sides in extended positions, facing north towards Mecca. The remains were re-interred after documentation, with teeth or small bone fragments retained for DNA studies. The calibrated radiocarbon dates for teeth collected from one third of the skeletons (N=13) ranged from 1615–1685 CE ($X- = 1647$ ce, ± 20).

DNA extraction was performed in a dedicated ancient DNA laboratory following established practices (for example, Kaestle and Horsburgh 2002; Pääbo *et al.* 2004). All pre-PCR procedures were undertaken in a separate clean room with positive HEPA filtered airflow and ultraviolet lights. Reagents were sterilised and aliquoted. Negative controls were included at all phases. DNA was extracted from teeth in all but two cases where only bone was collected. We extracted DNA from two teeth per individual to help identify potential contamination. Each sample was cleaned and soaked in 10 per cent sodium hypochloride for 15 minutes to destroy surface contaminants. After thorough rinsing with DNA-free water, the teeth were split longitudinally and demineralised in a 0.5 M EDTA solution and 10 per cent SDS for several days at 37 °C. Proteinase K was added overnight at 50 °C to digest any remaining proteins. DNA was extracted using a Gene Clean ancient DNA kit and modified protocol (Williams *et al.* 2008).

MtDNA and Y chromosome data collection

Sequence data was collected for the first hypervariable region (archaeological sample) or the complete control region (modern sample). MtDNA was amplified from the archaeological sample in multiple overlapping fragments and from the modern sample in a single large fragment (for amplification and sequencing primers, see supplementary material in publications section at www.raaum.org). For the archaeological sample, a restriction enzyme digestion of the C/T polymorphism at position 3594 was used to assign sequences to haplogroups L3 (3594C) or L1/L2 (3594T). Cycle sequencing products were generated from the PCR products using the BigDye Terminator v3.1 Cycle Sequencing reagents (Life Technologies) following the manufacturer's protocol for reduced reactions. The resultant chromatograms were assembled using either Geneious v5.0.4 (Biomatters) or Codoncode software 4.2.7 (Codoncode). Mitochondrial haplogroup were assigned based on PhyloTree build 16 (van Oven and Kayser 2009) using the HaploGrep utility (Kloss-Brandstätter *et al.* 2010). For the modern sequences, all additional analyses excluded variants in the 303–315 repeat region and variants between positions 16182 and 16193 because of alignment uncertainty in this region (Bendall and Sykes 1995).



[Figure 6.1](#) Y chromosome markers genotyped for the modern Swahili sample with percentage of individuals assigned to each haplogroup for the North Coast and South Coast samples combined and in total. The inset Y chromosome tree is the reduced set of haplogroups that could be assigned to achieve a broad set of comparative data

p.84

For the modern sample, Y chromosome haplogroups were assigned by genotyping 26 lineage informative markers ([Figure 6.1](#)) following the most recent Y haplogroup tree (International Society of Genetic Genealogy 2015). For primer and probe details, see supplementary material in publications section at www.raaum.org.

To situate the modern Swahili data in a local and regional context, we tabulated published mtDNA and Y chromosome comparative data from studies including at least 20 individuals per group (Tables 6.1–6.3). Gene diversity was calculated in R using Nei's estimator (Nei 1987). To assess Swahili population structure, we first calculated pairwise distances between all sampled individuals as the Euclidean distance between mtDNA sequences or Y chromosome genotypes and performed analysis of molecular variance (AMOVA) (Excoffier *et al.* 1992), as implemented in the R 'ade4' package v1.7.2 (Dray and Dufour 2007). Next, each unique mtDNA sequence or Y chromosome genotype was considered as a haplotype, and Nei's F_{ST} (G_{ST}) was calculated to estimate the genetic differentiation between groups using the implementation in the R 'mmod' package v1.2.1 (Winter 2012). Statistical significance was evaluated for both AMOVA and F_{ST} measures by permutation tests.

To identify which populations in the comparative sample are most similar genetically to the modern Swahili sample, we calculated pairwise genetic distances between all population pairs. F_{ST} measures of genetic differentiation perform poorly when gene diversity is close to its maximum (Jost 2008; Whitlock 2011), so for the mtDNA data we used Nei's standard genetic distance (Nei 1972) as implemented in the R 'adegenet' package v1.4.2 (Jombart 2008; Jombart and Ahmed 2011). For the less variable Y chromosome genotype data, we used Nei's F_{ST} estimator. Non-metric multidimensional scaling (MDS) was applied to transform the distance matrices into coordinates using the implementation in the R 'MASS' package v7.3.42 (Venables and Ripley 2002), with the number of dimensions chosen to achieve a stress value less than 0.1. We also represented genetic distance with a greyscale heatmap of points plotted on a map covering the sources of the comparative data. We plotted public domain map data from Natural Earth (Natural Earth 2015) with R packages 'sp' v1.1.1 and 'maptools' v0.8.36 (Bivand *et al.* 2013; Lewin-Koh *et al.* 2015).

[Table 6.1](#) Comparative sample for mitochondrial DNA analysis with diversity and distance statistics

	<i>N</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Language group</i>	<i>Gene diversity</i>	<i>Nucleotide diversity</i>	<i>D-Swahili</i>	<i>Rank D-Swahili</i>	<i>Data source</i>
Daasanach	37	Ethiopia	Cushitic	0.989	0.029	0.0024	29	Poloni <i>et al.</i> 2009
Oromo	33	Ethiopia	Cushitic	0.992	0.026	0.0100	47	Kivisild <i>et al.</i> 2004
Ethiopian	27	Ethiopia	Mixed	0.937	0.022	0.0111	49	Kivisild <i>et al.</i> 2004
Nyangatom	73	Ethiopia	Nilotic	0.982	0.029	0.0009	2	Poloni <i>et al.</i> 2009
Dawro-Konta	137	Ethiopia	Omotic	0.991	0.025	0.0016	14	Boattini <i>et al.</i> 2013
Amhara	120	Ethiopia	Semitic	0.991	0.027	0.0098	45	Kivisild <i>et al.</i> 2004

Gurage	21	Ethiopia	Semitic	1.000	0.025	0.0106	48	Kivisild <i>et al.</i> 2004
Tigray	53	Ethiopia	Semitic	0.993	0.025	0.0098	46	Kivisild <i>et al.</i> 2004
Gikuyu	26	Kenya	Bantu	0.978	0.024	0.0016	15	Hirbo 2011
Luhya	22	Kenya	Bantu	0.983	0.026	0.0022	24	Hirbo 2011
Pare	26	Kenya	Bantu	0.968	0.029	0.0015	13	Hirbo 2011
Taita	28	Kenya	Bantu	0.964	0.029	0.0036	36	Hirbo 2011
Boni	30	Kenya	Cushitic	0.940	0.027	0.0033	32	Hirbo 2011
Borana	54	Kenya	Cushitic	0.988	0.025	0.0012	7	Hirbo 2011
Burji	27	Kenya	Cushitic	0.986	0.030	0.0022	26	Hirbo 2011
El Molo1	52	Kenya	Cushitic	0.885	0.026	0.0052	41	Boattini <i>et al.</i> 2013
El Molo2	26	Kenya	Cushitic	0.843	0.025	0.0056	42	Hirbo 2011
Gabra	22	Kenya	Cushitic	0.970	0.023	0.0019	21	Hirbo 2011
Garreh	24	Kenya	Cushitic	0.982	0.024	0.0017	17	Hirbo 2011
Konso	20	Kenya	Cushitic	0.953	0.026	0.0042	38	Hirbo 2011
Orma	22	Kenya	Cushitic	0.978	0.025	0.0010	5	Hirbo 2011
Rendille	29	Kenya	Cushitic	0.983	0.024	0.0017	18	Hirbo 2011
Wata	24	Kenya	Cushitic	0.957	0.019	0.0027	30	Hirbo 2011
Yaaku	29	Kenya	Cushitic	0.953	0.022	0.0042	39	Hirbo 2011
Nairobi	100	Kenya	Mixed	0.994	0.027	0.0007	1	Brandstaetter <i>et al.</i> 2004
Ilchamus	28	Kenya	Nilotic	0.971	0.027	0.0022	28	Hirbo 2011
Luo1	49	Kenya	Nilotic	0.977	0.027	0.0009	3	Boattini <i>et al.</i> 2013
Luo2	25	Kenya	Nilotic	0.980	0.022	0.0014	11	Hirbo 2011
Maasai1	81	Kenya	Nilotic	0.987	0.028	0.0013	8	Boattini <i>et al.</i> 2013
Pokot	47	Kenya	Nilotic	0.976	0.028	0.0022	25	Hirbo 2011
Sabaot	22	Kenya	Nilotic	0.983	0.026	0.0022	27	Hirbo 2011
Samburu1	35	Kenya	Nilotic	0.983	0.026	0.0017	16	Boattini <i>et al.</i> 2013
Samburu2	26	Kenya	Nilotic	0.969	0.025	0.0018	20	Hirbo 2011
Sengwer	30	Kenya	Nilotic	0.961	0.029	0.0035	34	Hirbo 2011
Tugen	32	Kenya	Nilotic	0.971	0.027	0.0021	23	Hirbo 2011
Turkana1	51	Kenya	Nilotic	0.987	0.026	0.0010	4	Boattini <i>et al.</i> 2013
Turkana2	29	Kenya	Nilotic	0.968	0.025	0.0015	12	Hirbo 2011
Somali	190	Somalia	Cushitic	0.979	0.023	0.0013	9	Mikkelsen <i>et al.</i> 2012
Rangi	24	Tanzania	Bantu	0.978	0.030	0.0012	6	Hirbo 2011
Sukuma	21	Tanzania	Bantu	1.000	0.030	0.0020	22	Knight <i>et al.</i> 2003
Turu	24	Tanzania	Bantu	0.975	0.025	0.0017	19	Hirbo 2011
Burunge	26	Tanzania	Cushitic	0.935	0.023	0.0043	40	Hirbo 2011
Iraqw	23	Tanzania	Cushitic	0.980	0.028	0.0032	31	Hirbo 2011
Hadza1	49	Tanzania	Isolate	0.727	0.016	0.0059	43	Knight <i>et al.</i> 2003
Hadza2	76	Tanzania	Isolate	0.732	0.017	0.0071	44	Tishkoff <i>et al.</i> 2007
Sandawe	22	Tanzania	Isolate	0.969	0.029	0.0036	35	Hirbo 2011
Akie	23	Tanzania	Nilotic	0.937	0.027	0.0040	37	Hirbo 2011
Datog	28	Tanzania	Nilotic	0.976	0.029	0.0034	33	Hirbo 2011
Maasai2	27	Tanzania	Nilotic	0.983	0.030	0.0014	10	Hirbo 2011
Total	2,050			0.961	0.026	0.0033		
				± 0.054	± 0.003	± 0.0028		

[Table 6.2](#) African Y chromosome comparative sample with diversity and distance statistics

	<i>N</i>	Country	Language group	Haplogroup diversity	$F_{ST}^{NC^a}$	Rank F_{ST}^{NC}	$F_{ST}^{SC^b}$	Rank F_{ST}^{SC}	Data source
East Africa									
Amhara	48	Ethiopia	Semitic	0.770	0.073	18	0.152	24	Semino <i>et al.</i> 2002
Oromo	78	Ethiopia	Cushitic	0.738	0.061	15	0.167	29	Semino <i>et al.</i> 2002
Boni	21	Kenya	Cushitic	0.623	0.013	2	0.015	2	Hirbo 2011
Borana	58	Kenya	Cushitic	0.580	0.123	27	0.238	32	Hirbo 2011
Buji	23	Kenya	Cushitic	0.704	0.051	10	0.130	20	Hirbo 2011
Gabra	29	Kenya	Cushitic	0.533	0.127	28	0.253	33	Hirbo 2011
Garreh	27	Kenya	Cushitic	0.382	0.193	31	0.324	35	Hirbo 2011
Gikuyu	24	Kenya	Bantu	0.413	0.105	24	0.019	3	Hirbo 2011
Ilchamus	28	Kenya	Nilotic	0.679	0.094	20	0.165	28	Hirbo 2011
Luo	27	Kenya	Nilotic	0.513	0.183	29	0.145	22	Hirbo 2011
Marakwet	20	Kenya	Nilotic	0.755	0.058	12	0.152	25	Hirbo 2011
Ogiek	24	Kenya	Nilotic	0.625	0.014	3	0.084	14	Hirbo 2011
Pokot	38	Kenya	Nilotic	0.778	0.061	13	0.109	16	Hirbo 2011
Rendille	31	Kenya	Cushitic	0.716	0.048	8	0.167	30	Hirbo 2011
Sabaot	22	Kenya	Nilotic	0.607	0.007	1	0.035	7	Hirbo 2011
Sengwer	29	Kenya	Nilotic	0.747	0.071	17	0.153	26	Hirbo 2011
Taita	29	Kenya	Bantu	0.238	0.185	30	0.055	9	Hirbo 2011
Tugen	34	Kenya	Nilotic	0.353	0.185	30	0.055	9	Hirbo 2011
Turkana	32	Kenya	Nilotic	0.787	0.079	19	0.094	15	Hirbo 2011
Yaaku	24	Kenya	Cushitic	0.611	0.096	22	0.159	27	Hirbo 2011

Burunge	48	Tanzania	Cushitic	0.777	0.063	16	0.115	18	Hirbo 2011
Datog	50	Tanzania	Nilotic	0.702	0.036	7	0.128	19	Hirbo 2011
Hadza	42	Tanzania	Isolate	0.670	0.096	21	0.113	17	Hirbo 2011
Iraqw	47	Tanzania	Cushitic	0.662	0.035	6	0.145	23	Hirbo 2011
Maasai	36	Tanzania	Nilotic	0.793	0.052	11	0.055	10	Hirbo 2011
Mbugu	20	Tanzania	Cushitic	0.535	0.101	23	0.134	21	Hirbo 2011
Mbugwe	21	Tanzania	Bantu	0.698	0.049	9	0.072	13	Hirbo 2011
Pare	21	Tanzania	Bantu	0.194	0.202	33	0.059	11	Hirbo 2011
Rangi	32	Tanzania	Bantu	0.726	0.019	4	0.013	1	Hirbo 2011
Sandawe	70	Tanzania	Isolate	0.693	0.025	5	0.026	5	Hirbo 2011
Turu	29	Tanzania	Bantu	0.634	0.061	14	0.029	6	Hirbo 2011
Madagascar and Comoros									
Ampanabaka	46	Madagascar	Non-African	0.195	0.198	32	0.063	12	Capredon <i>et al.</i> 2013
Anteony	40	Madagascar	Non-African	0.349	0.264	35	0.238	31	Capredon <i>et al.</i> 2013
Malagasy Coastal	87	Madagascar	Non-African	0.474	0.114	26	0.024	4	Poetsch <i>et al.</i> 2013
Comoros	381	Comoros	Non-African	0.472	0.109	25	0.035	8	Msaidie <i>et al.</i> 2011
Total	1,817			± 0.166	± 0.068		0.119		
							± 0.082		

a Nei's F_{ST} to Swahili North Coast samples.

b Nei's F_{ST} to Swahili South Coast samples.

Table 6.3 Non-African Y chromosome comparative sample with diversity and distance statistics

	<i>N</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Haplogroup diversity</i>	<i>F_{ST}. Swahili</i>	<i>Rank F_{ST}.Swahili</i>	<i>Data source</i>
Africa						
Amhara	18	Ethiopia	0.290	0.158	42	Semino <i>et al.</i> 2002
Comoros	148	Comoros	0.819	0.023	6	Msaidie <i>et al.</i> 2011
West Asia						
Iraq	154	Iraq	0.725	0.028	8	Grugni <i>et al.</i> 2012
Marsh Arab	143	Iraq	0.243	0.179	45	Al-Zahery <i>et al.</i> 2011
Oman	121	Oman	0.698	0.039	16	Luis <i>et al.</i> 2004
Qatar	72	Qatar	0.484	0.090	32	Cadenas <i>et al.</i> 2008
Saudi Arabia	157	Saudi Arabia	0.675	0.037	15	Abu-Amro <i>et al.</i> 2009
UAE	164	UAE	0.758	0.022	5	Cadenas <i>et al.</i> 2008
Socotra	63	Yemen	0.102	0.241	47	Černý <i>et al.</i> 2009
Yemen1	62	Yemen	0.237	0.175	44	Cadenas <i>et al.</i> 2008
Yemen2	40	Yemen	0.112	0.233	46	Raaum <i>et al.</i> 2013
Central Asia						
North Iran	33	Iran	0.768	0.032	12	Regueiro <i>et al.</i> 2006
South Iran	117	Iran	0.794	0.021	4	Regueiro <i>et al.</i> 2006
Armenian	34	Iran	0.748	0.030	11	Grugni <i>et al.</i> 2012
Assyrian	39	Iran	0.714	0.051	20	Grugni <i>et al.</i> 2012
Azeri	63	Iran	0.702	0.059	23	Grugni <i>et al.</i> 2012
Baluch	24	Iran	0.718	0.043	17	Grugni <i>et al.</i> 2012
Bandari	131	Iran	0.710	0.063	24	Grugni <i>et al.</i> 2012
Fars Persian	44	Iran	0.826	0.013	2	Grugni <i>et al.</i> 2012
Gheshmi	49	Iran	0.756	0.028	9	Grugni <i>et al.</i> 2012
Gilak	64	Iran	0.746	0.033	13	Grugni <i>et al.</i> 2012
Iranian Arab	57	Iran	0.746	0.011	1	Grugni <i>et al.</i> 2012
Iranian Kurd	59	Iran	0.757	0.034	14	Grugni <i>et al.</i> 2012
Khorasan Persian	59	Iran	0.730	0.051	21	Grugni <i>et al.</i> 2012
Lur	50	Iran	0.710	0.051	19	Grugni <i>et al.</i> 2012
Mazandarani	72	Iran	0.777	0.021	3	Grugni <i>et al.</i> 2012
Turkmen	68	Iran	0.541	0.124	40	Grugni <i>et al.</i> 2012
Yazd Persian	46	Iran	0.756	0.029	10	Grugni <i>et al.</i> 2012
Zoroastrian	34	Iran	0.771	0.026	7	Grugni <i>et al.</i> 2012
South Asia						
Andhra Pradesh	173	India	0.659	0.101	35	Sahoo <i>et al.</i> 2006
Bihar	96	India	0.483	0.160	43	Sahoo <i>et al.</i> 2006
Gujarat	284	India	0.722	0.090	31	Khurana <i>et al.</i> 2014
Kerala	65	India	0.708	0.090	30	Sahoo <i>et al.</i> 2006
Maharashtra	123	India	0.676	0.106	37	Sahoo <i>et al.</i> 2006
Odisha	107	India	0.702	0.089	28	Sahoo <i>et al.</i> 2006
Tamil Nadu	67	India	0.578	0.145	41	Sahoo <i>et al.</i> 2006
Uttar Pradesh	50	India	0.620	0.113	39	Sahoo <i>et al.</i> 2006
West Bengal	99	India	0.728	0.090	29	Sahoo <i>et al.</i> 2006
Maldives	126	Maldives	0.755	0.059	22	Pijpe <i>et al.</i> 2013
Burusho	97	Pakistan	0.636	0.105	36	Firasat <i>et al.</i> 2006
Kalash	44	Pakistan	0.780	0.050	18	Firasat <i>et al.</i> 2006
Pakistan	638	Pakistan	0.642	0.090	33	Firasat <i>et al.</i> 2006
Pakistan North	85	Pakistan	0.744	0.073	26	Sengupta <i>et al.</i> 2006
Pakistan South	91	Pakistan	0.683	0.071	25	Sengupta <i>et al.</i> 2006
Pathan1	96	Pakistan	0.644	0.093	34	Firasat <i>et al.</i> 2006
Pathan2	270	Pakistan	0.582	0.113	38	Lee <i>et al.</i> 2014
Sinhalese	39	Sri Lanka	0.673	0.086	27	Kivisild <i>et al.</i> 2003
Total	4,735		0.646	0.078		
			± 0.177	± 0.056		

Results

Modern Swahili mtDNA variation

For the full control region sequences, we obtained 101 unique sequences from 179 individuals. Mitochondrial gene diversity in this Swahili sample is very high (0.979), with moderate nucleotide diversity (0.014). Almost all (94 per cent) of the Swahili mtDNA sequences could be confidently assigned to an L mitochondrial haplogroup, typical of African populations ([Table 6.4](#)). Of the 11 sequences assigned to a non-L haplogroup, four (B4a1a1, I, M7c1a4a, N1a1a) have been reported in eastern African or Malagasy populations (Castrì *et al.* 2008; Tofanelli *et al.* 2009; Msaidie *et al.* 2011; Boattini *et al.* 2013; Kusuma *et al.* 2015). The remaining seven non-L haplotypes have plausible origins in populations around the Indian Ocean.

We could not identify any population structure in mitochondrial variation across the Swahili sample. AMOVA indicated that the amount of mtDNA variation within towns, between towns within regions, and between regions (North vs. South Coast) did not differ from random partitioning ([Table 6.5](#)). Nei's F_{ST} also does not differentiate the North and South Coast groups ($F_{ST} = 0.005$, $p = 0.072$, permutation test $n = 1000$).

[Table 6.4](#) Mitochondrial haplogroups in the contemporary Kenyan Swahili sample

	<i>North Coast</i>	<i>South Coast</i>	<i>Total</i>	
Haplogroup	N = 111	N = 68	N = 179	Most common in
L0a	15.3	19.1	16.8	Southeast Africa
L0d	1.8	10.3	5.0	South Africa
L0f	2.7		1.7	East Africa
L1b	1.8		1.1	West Africa
L1c	3.6	4.4	3.9	Central Africa
L2a	18.0	11.8	15.6	Throughout Africa
L2b	1.8		1.1	West Africa
L2c	3.6	1.5	2.8	West Africa
L2e		1.5	0.6	West Africa
L3a	0.9		0.6	Horn of Africa
L3b	7.2	5.9	6.7	West Africa
L3d	9.9	5.9	8.4	West Africa
L3e	16.2	8.8	13.4	Throughout Africa
L3f	3.6	2.9	3.4	Throughout Africa
L3h	0.9		0.6	Horn of Africa
L3i	1.8		1.1	Horn of Africa
L3x	0.9		0.6	Horn of Africa
L4a		1.5	0.6	East Africa
L4b	6.3	14.7	9.5	East Africa
L5b		1.5	0.6	East Africa
Non L				
B4a1a1		1.5	0.6	Polynesia and Madagascar
G2b2c	0.9		0.6	East and Central Asia
I	0.9		0.6	East Africa and West Asia
M39b1		1.5	0.6	South Asia
M6‡		1.5	0.6	South Asia
M73'79‡		1.5	0.6	Southeast Asia
M7c1a4a		1.5	0.6	Southeast Asia and Madagascar
N1a1a	0.9		0.6	East Africa and West Asia
P5/R1‡		1.5	0.6	Australia/Central and South Asia
T2b2b1	0.9		0.6	Europe, India, and Iran
U2b1		1.5	0.6	Central and South Asia
Gene diversity	0.892	0.897	0.979	
Nucleotide diversity	0.013	0.015	0.014	

‡ Low confidence (< 80 per cent) haplogroup assignment.

[*Table 6.5*](#) Analysis of molecular variance (AMOVA) results in the Swahili sample

		<i>Variation</i>	<i>% Variation</i>	Φ	<i>p-value</i>
mtDNA	Within towns	15.99	98.46	0.015	0.077
	Between towns within region	0.18	1.12	0.011	0.166
	Between regions	0.07	0.42	0.004	0.234
All Y lineages	Within towns	5.09	91.92	0.081	0.001
	Between towns within region	0.41	7.43	0.075	0.002
	Between regions	0.04	0.65	0.007	0.197
African Y lineages	Within towns	2.60	72.91	0.271	0.001
	Between towns within region	0.37	10.47	0.126	0.013
	Between regions	0.59	16.62	0.166	0.005
Non-African Y lineages	Within towns	3.26	87.11	0.129	0.001
	Between towns within region	0.49	13.01	0.130	0.001
	Between regions	0.00	0.00	0.000	0.391

Archaeological Swahili mtDNA variation

The archaeological mtDNA sequences were extremely diverse; all 38 samples yielded unique haplotypes ([Table 6.6](#)). The majority (N = 27, 71 per cent) could confidently be assigned to L haplogroups. Four individuals were assigned to non-L haplogroups (B4, HV1b, J1/2 and R0), each of which has been previously reported in eastern Africa, Madagascar or the Comoros Islands (Tofanelli *et al.* 2009; Hirbo 2011; Msaidie *et al.* 2011; Boattini *et al.* 2013). Several mtDNA haplogroups (L1b, L1c, L2b, L2c, L2e, L3b, L3d) common in West and Central Africa are found in high frequencies in Bantu-speaking groups in eastern Africa, when compared with eastern African groups who speak Nilo-Saharan and Afro-Asiatic languages. Four of these haplogroups (L1c, L2b, L3b and L3d) were found in 26 per cent (N = 10) of the Mtwapa individuals. Only one mtDNA sequence in haplogroup L3e3 is shared between the archaeological and modern Swahili samples, and this sequence is also found in several other modern eastern African populations.

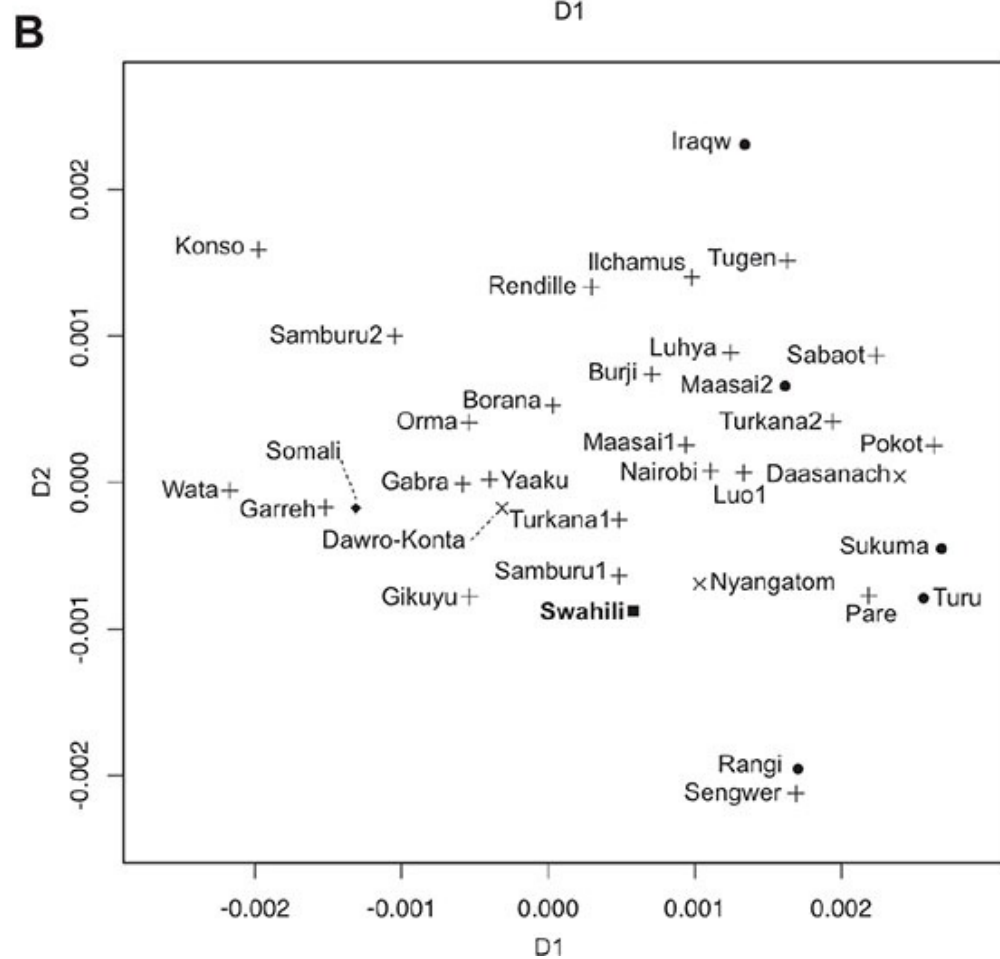
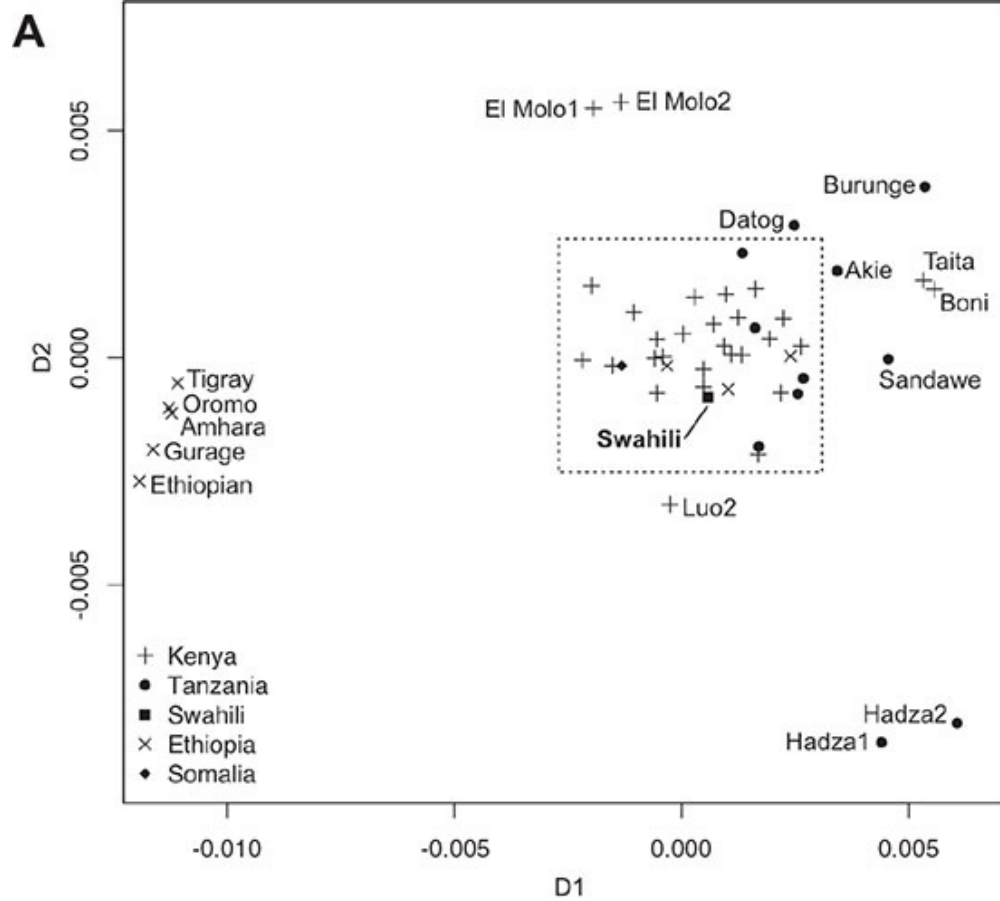
Swahili mtDNA variation in the comparative context

For the comparative analysis, the Swahili mitochondrial dataset was reduced to hypervariable region 1 (HVR1) to maximise the published mtDNA data that could be included. MDS analysis (k = 3, stress = 0.078) of the pairwise genetic differences across all populations in the comparative dataset reveals several groups of highly differentiated populations – an Ethiopian cluster, the Hadza of Tanzania and the El Molo of Kenya – and a large grouping of the remaining populations including the Swahili ([Figure 6.2](#)). In this MDS visualisation of genetic distance, the groups closest to the Swahili are primarily Bantu-speakers from inland Kenya and Tanzania and their Nilotic-speaking neighbours.

3592HpaI Control region bp 16056–16400			Tentative	
			assignment	Most common in
1	L1.2	16223T 16256T 16278T 16294T	L2a	Throughout Africa
2	L1.2	16189C 16230G 16278T 16290T 16311C 16368C	L0f	East Africa
3	L3	16093C 16124C 16182C 16183C 16189C 16223T 16248T 16325C 16362C	L3b	West Africa
4	L1.2	16189C 16223T 16290T 16311C 16319A 16362C		Africa
5	L3	16145A 16217C 16319A	L3	
6		16223T 16260T 16304C 16362T		Africa
7	L3	16261T 16298C 16325C 16327T	L3	
8	L3	16111T 16270T 16309G 16390A	L3	
9	L3	16223t 16235G 16357C 16362C	L3b	West Africa
10	L3	16189C 16223T 16297C		
11	L3	16067T 16099T 16232T 16239T 16274A 16311C 16329A 16336A 16346A 16389A	L3	
12	L3	16166d 16223T 16265T	L3e	Throughout Africa
13	L1.2	16224C 16311C 16320T	L1.2	Africa
14	L3	16111T 16223T	L3	
15	L3	16111T 16124C 16170G 16183d 16375T	L3d	West Africa
16	L1.2	16093C 16129C 16223T 16278T	L2a	Throughout Africa
17	L3	16223T 16230G	L0d	South Africa
18	L3	16069T 16126C 16182T 16183C 16189C		South Africa
19	L1.2	16092C 16170G 16183D 16223T 16362C		Africa
20	L3	16223T 16278T 16311C 16319A 16362C	L3	
21	L3	16183C 16189C 16270T		
22	L3	16148T 16223T 16254G 16298Y 16319A	L3a	Horn of Africa
23	L1.2	16111T 16278T	L1b	West Africa
24		16223T 16274A 16311C 16319A 16362C		
25	L3	16111T 16223T 16319A 16362C	L3	
26	L3	16111T 16126C 16223T 16278T 16311C	L3	
27	L1.2	16189C 16223T 16278T 16311C	L1C	Central Africa
28	L1.2	16092C 16223T 16362C	L2a	Throughout Africa
29	L3	16126C 16256T 16311C 16320T	L3	
30	L3	16182C 16183C 16189C 16217C 16353T		
31	L3	16111T 16362C	L3	
32	L3	16182T 16183C 16189C	L3	
33	L3	16140C 16249C		European cranial features
34	L3	16183C 16189C 16223t 16265T	L3e3	Throughout Africa
35	L1.2	16140C 16291T 16311C	L1.2	Africa
36	L3	16111T 16142T 16223T 16311C	L3d	West Africa
37	L1.2	16129A 16189C 16223T 16319A 16362C	L2b	West Africa
38	L1.2	16187T 16223T 16278T 16290T 16319A 16362C	L0f	East Africa

To visualise the geographic distribution of genetic distance from the Swahili, we plotted a greyscale heatmap onto a map of eastern Africa where darker points are more similar to the Swahili, lighter points are less similar ([Figure 6.3](#)). The two groups geographically closest to the Swahili sampling sites, the Boni and the Taita, are not genetically close to the Swahili. The two groups relatively close to the Swahili sampling locations that are genetically similar to the Swahili are the Cushitic-speaking Orma of the lower Tana River region and the Somali. Otherwise, the populations genetically closest to

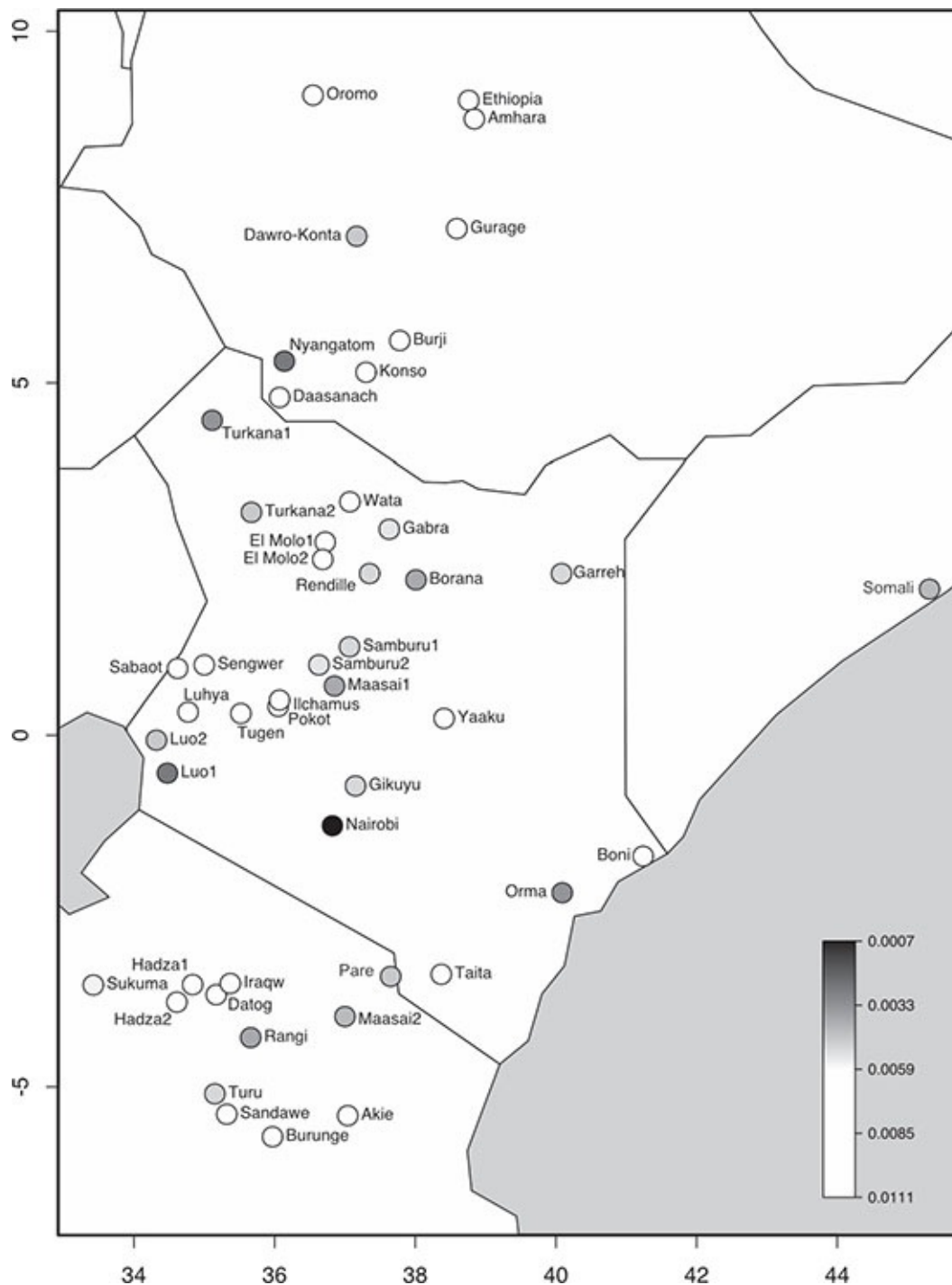
the Swahili are Bantu-speakers along the Eastern Rift Valley and their Nilotic-speaking neighbours.



[Figure 6.2](#) MDS visualisation of mtDNA genetic distance across the full comparative sample set ($k = 3$, stress = 0.078). The full distribution of points is shown in panel (A) with the cluster within the dotted line box expanded in panel (B)

Swahili Y chromosome variation

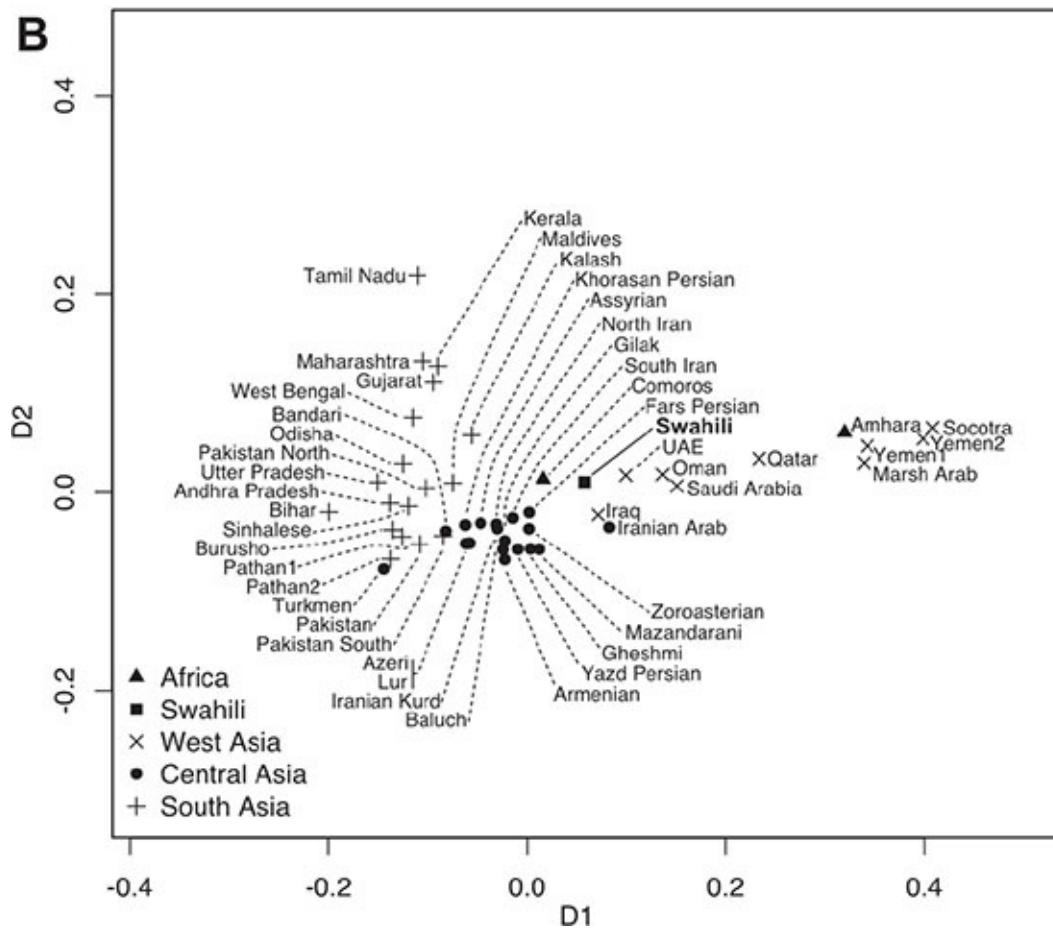
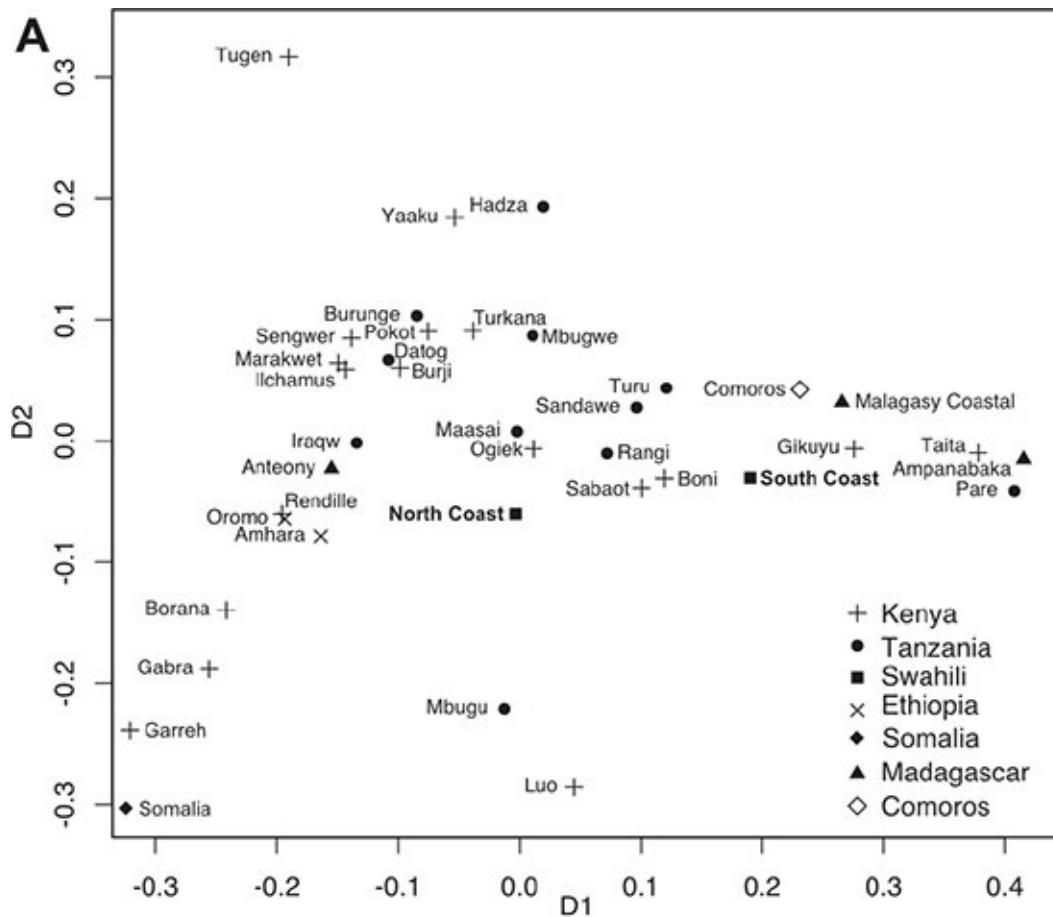
Swahili males could be confidently assigned to 18 distinct Y chromosome haplogroups ([Figure 6.1](#)) with relatively high Y chromosome haplogroup diversity (0.889). Human Y chromosome haplogroups are geographically partitioned, with haplogroups A, B and most E lineages typically found in African populations, and haplogroup D and mega-haplogroup F (F–R) typically found in non-African populations (Chiaroni *et al.* 2009). The majority (52 per cent) of Y chromosome haplogroups identified in the Swahili sample are in the typically non-African F mega-haplogroup. Slightly less than half (45 per cent) are haplogroups typical of African populations. About 3 per cent of Swahili males in the sample have haplogroup T, which has a disjunct distribution in eastern Africa, West Asia, Europe and parts of South Asia (Mendez *et al.* 2011).



[Figure 6.3](#) MtDNA genetic distance from the Swahili sample in the geographic context. Darker circles indicate closer genetic affinity to the Swahili.

Swahili Y chromosome lineages show evidence of population structure. AMOVA of the full dataset indicates reduced variation within towns and increased variation between towns within regions than expected, but not more variation than expected between the North and South Coast ([Table 6.5](#)). However, Nei's F_{ST} between the North and South Coast groups is significantly larger than expected ($F_{ST} = 0.019$, $p < 0.001$, permutation test $n = 1000$). To explore these results further, we performed AMOVA and F_{ST}

calculations separately for African and non-African haplogroup data partitions. First, AMOVA of the African Y chromosome lineages reveals less variation within towns than expected and more variation between towns within regions, but also finds more variation between regions than expected ([Table 6.5](#)). In agreement, F_{ST} between the two regions is greater than expected by chance ($F_{ST} = 0.064$, $p = 0.002$, permutation test $n = 1000$). Second, AMOVA of the non-African Y chromosome lineages again reveals less variation within towns and more variation between towns within regions than expected. However, like the AMOVA of the total dataset, there is no significant difference between regions ([Table 6.5](#)) and the between region F_{ST} is not significantly greater than expected ($F_{ST} = 0.017$, $p = 0.075$, permutation test $n = 1000$).



[*Figure 6.4*](#) MDS visualisation of Y chromosome genetic distance for (A) African haplogroups ($k = 3$, stress = 0.091) and (B) non-African haplogroups ($k = 2$, stress = 0.060)

Coast subset of the Swahili for African haplogroups, (B) the South Coast subset for African haplogroups, and (C) the total Swahili sample for non-African haplogroups. Darker circles indicate closer genetic affinity to the Swahili.

p.96

Swahili Y chromosome variation in the comparative context

For the comparative analysis, the possible Y chromosome haplogroup assignments were reduced from the 28 typed for the Swahili sample to a set of 16 ([Figure 6.1](#) inset) that could be assigned for a broad range of published data. As we found that the African Y chromosome haplogroups in our Swahili sample are significantly differentiated between the North and South Coast samples, we analysed these sample subsets separately. For the non-African lineages, the total Swahili sample was used because no significant difference was found between the North and South Coast samples. Focusing first on the African Y chromosome lineages ([Table 6.2](#)), the average genetic distance between the North Coast sample and the other groups (0.095) is somewhat lower than the average distance for the South Coast group (0.119). To visualise these relations, we transformed the pairwise F_{ST} matrix into coordinates in an MDS analysis ($k = 3$, stress = 0.091) ([Figure 6.4A](#)). What stands out on this visualisation is that the North Coast and South Coast samples are quite differentiated from each other and neither falls squarely into a Kenyan or Bantu-speaker or coastal cluster. In fact, there are no obvious geographic or linguistic clusters on the plot at all, with groups from all countries and language groups in eastern Africa spread more or less similarly across the dimensions.

To visualise the genetic distances in geographic context, we plotted a greyscale heatmap onto a map of eastern Africa where darker points are more similar to the North Coast and lighter points are less similar ([Figure 6.5A](#)) and the same for the South Coast ([Figure 6.5B](#)). As seen in the mtDNA results, the geographic distribution of genetically most similar populations is quite disjunct. For the North Coast sample, apart from the Boni population, the most similar groups are in the northern Tanzanian Highlands (Rangi, Sandawe, Iraqw, Datog, Mbugwe), western Kenya (Sabaot, Ogiek) and northern Kenya (Rendille). There is some overlap with the populations genetically closest to the South Coast sample (Boni, Sabaot, Rangi and Sandawe), but where the North Coast sample had little genetic affinity for populations on or near the coast, the South Coast sample is genetically close to the geographically adjacent Taita as well as to groups plausibly connected by sea links (Comoros, Malagasy Coastal and Ampanabaka).

Visualising the non-African Y chromosome lineage after MDS transformation ($k = 2$, stress = 0.060) situates the Swahili in between Arabian and Iranian populations ([Figure 6.4B](#)). The greyscale heatmap plot of genetic affinity for the Swahili non-African Y chromosome lineages ([Figure 6.5C](#)) reveals that the most similar populations are in

southern Iran, Oman and the United Arab Emirates, with a number of relatively similar populations found throughout Iran.

Discussion

The Swahili sample analysed here shows high diversity in both modern and archaeological mtDNA as well as modern Y chromosome lineages. There is no detectable geographic structure of mtDNA lineages at any level, which suggests that female migration among or into Swahili settlements has been relatively common at both short and long distances. In contrast, Y chromosome lineages are structured, with less variation within towns and more variation between towns than would be expected by chance ([Table 6.5](#)). This difference in structure between these sex-specific lineages suggests that over the long term there has been less inter-community male migration than female migration. In this context, ‘migration’ refers solely to reproductive integration into a new community.

The female ancestry of the Swahili mostly originates in African populations. A large majority of both the archaeological (71 per cent) and the modern (94 per cent) mtDNA lineages are typical of African populations. The high gene diversity present suggests a relatively large and diverse set of source populations for the mtDNA of the Swahili. The comparative populations most similar mitochondrially to the modern Swahili are geographically distant, with the top five most similar groups being the ethnically mixed urban sample from Nairobi, the Nyangatom, Luo, Turkana and Orma ([Table 6.1](#), [Figure 6.3](#)). The observed mtDNA affinity of the Swahili to Bantu-speakers and their Nilotic-speaking neighbours from inland Kenya, Tanzania and southwest Ethiopia, and the relatively low matrilineal genetic affinity of the Swahili to geographically adjacent groups ([Figure 6.3](#)), is more likely to be the result of common maternal origins than recent female migration. That is, some common set of ancestral populations contributed to the Swahili, Nyangatom, Luo and other genetically similar populations of today. While the genetic data alone cannot exclude more recent female migration as the primary source of the similarities between the Swahili and these distant inland populations, this scenario would require some evidence of long-term bi-directional connections between the Swahili and these specific populations, which, to our knowledge, is absent. The historic slave trade could potentially explain some genetic migration from inland populations to the coast, since there is support for the incorporation of slaves and vassals, particularly females, into Swahili communities (Eastman 1988, 1994). However, the documented sources of the overseas slave trade are in Mozambique and northern Madagascar and the main known alternative sources of slaves or servants in Kenyan Swahili communities are geographically adjacent groups like the Taita, Pokomo and other Mijikenda populations (Kusimba 2004; Vernet 2009).

A small proportion of mtDNA lineages from the modern Swahili (7 per cent) and a larger proportion of lineages from the archaeological Swahili (11–26 per cent) are non-L lineages. In the modern sample, four of the eleven non-L lineages are found in other populations in eastern Africa or Madagascar. However, the remaining seven are not found in other regional populations and most likely originate in populations around the Indian Ocean. This supports some migration of non-African females into Swahili communities through Indian Ocean trade network links. The archaeological Swahili data from Mtwapa are consistent with the modern data, with at least 11 per cent of mtDNA lineages of a non-L type present in other eastern African or Malagasy populations. An additional 16 per cent of the archaeological mtDNA lineages could potentially be of foreign origin, but require further analysis for confident determination. We might expect to find higher proportions of non-African haplogroups in archaeological samples than are observed in modern Swahili populations, if nonlocal men were adopted into the community or held special relationships with local Swahili that permitted them to be buried in Swahili cemeteries upon death. Although Swahili tombs are generally reserved for family members, friends or trading partners may be buried in a family's tomb if burial elsewhere is not feasible (Mchulla, personal observation). Therefore, it is perhaps noteworthy that one of the male skeletons in the tombs with an mtDNA haplotype that has not yet been confidently assigned to an African haplogroup has what Monge describes as European facial features.

The Y chromosome data reveal diverse biological ancestries for modern Swahili males. Slightly more males have non-African (52–55 per cent) than African (45–48 per cent) Y chromosomes. Focusing first on the African Y chromosomes, there is a stronger affinity between the Swahili and their geographic neighbours than was seen in the mtDNA results, particularly for the South Coast sample, which is genetically similar to adjacent Bantu-speaking Taita and Pare populations. However, as with the mtDNA results, many of the most genetically similar populations are geographically distant inland groups in Kenya and Tanzania.

The non-African origin Y chromosomes show the greatest genetic similarity to populations around the Strait of Hormuz and extending through central and western Iran into Iraq ([Table 6.3](#), Figure 6.5C). It is unlikely that there is a single source population for the non-African Y chromosomes in the Swahili. The most probable scenario would be that the various ancestral populations that contributed to the modern Y chromosome structure of the circum-Persian Gulf region are similar to the groups that contributed migrants to the Swahili coast through Indian Ocean trading networks.

The Y chromosome results indicate that Omani intermarriage of the eighteenth century onwards is unlikely to be the only source of non-African ancestry; much closer genetic similarity with the Omani population would be expected than what is observed. Some

non-African ancestry would certainly have been introduced by the Omanis, but there must have been other sources, either contemporaneous with the imposition of Omani political control or before. Finally, while the Portuguese had an important political and military presence in the region from the 1500s through to the 1700s CE, there is no evidence for any genetic contribution from them.

The genetic data are consistent with some settlement of non-African migrants in Swahili communities prior to the eighteenth century. However, these data should not be seen as supportive of the old colonial theories of Arabian colonies on the Swahili coast. There is little archaeological evidence to support establishment of permanent settlement by non-Africans in eastern Africa at the origins of the Swahili towns and city-states prior to 1000 CE. Indeed, the archaeological evidence from any extensively excavated site shows only evidence of pre-Muslim indigenous populations in those places (Abungu 1990; Horton 1996; Juma 1996, 2004). Even in cases where oral tradition suggests immigration prior to 1000 CE, political control by the descendants of the immigrant is described as developing gradually. For example, the Ba-Alawi clan from Shiraz (Iran) are reported to have been resident in the Swahili world for centuries before they became rulers of Vumba Kuu (Hollis 1900; McKay 1975), and the Nebhans from Oman did not emerge as the Nabahani dynasty of Pate until they had been resident there for three centuries (Martin 1974; Wilkinson 1981; Ibrahim 1990; Allen 1993: 244; Tolmacheva 1993; Pouwels 2002). The Y chromosome data, in concert with the historical and archaeological data, suggest a trickle of non-African males into Swahili communities over a long period of time.

There is only one shared mtDNA sequence between the Mtwapa archaeological and the modern Swahili samples, which indicates substantial mitochondrial turnover, but this may be what should be expected. We found no evidence for mitochondrial population structure in the modern sample, indicating relatively common movements of females among towns all along the Kenyan coast. Ongoing female migration along the Swahili coast over several hundred years would result in substantial changes in the specific mitochondrial sequences present, especially if females are constantly being absorbed into the Swahili community.

The major limitation of our study is the extent and randomness of modern population sampling. While our sample size is relatively large (mtDNA: 179; Y chromosome: 189) and includes samples collected at 13 localities along the Kenyan coast, it does include some bias. Specifically, the sample collection procedure is not entirely random because friends, acquaintances and more or less distant relatives of local assistants and guides are certain to be over-represented in our data. We hope to alleviate this bias with new sample collections in additional communities along with repeat sample collections with different local contacts in already visited communities. Nonetheless, most of the published comparative samples have smaller sample sizes ($N = 40-100$, Tables 6.1–6.3) and were typically collected at a single sampling location.

Acknowledgements

The research in Kenya was carried out under permit NCST/5/002/E/543 granted by the Kenyan National Council for Science and Technology and excavation permit NMK/GVT/2 granted by the Ministry of Sports and Culture through the National Museums of Kenya. The enthusiastic support of the Director-General of the National Museums of Kenya, Dr Idle Farah and Dr Herman Kiriamu, Head, Coastal Archaeology and community leaders too numerous to name made it possible for the team to conduct this sensitive but important research. We are grateful to all of our project participants for their tireless contributions to this research and to our archaeological crew and laboratory assistants for their hard work. Funding was provided by NSF BCS 1029433, NSF BCS 1029506, NEH RZ-51329-11, the Field Museum's Council of Africa and Anthropology Alliance, and a PSC-CUNY Award, jointly funded by The Professional Staff Congress and The City University of New York.

p.99

References

- Abu-Amero, K., Hellani, A., Gonzalez, A., Larruga, J., Cabrera, V. and Underhill, P. 2009. 'Saudi Arabian Y-chromosome diversity and its relationship with nearby regions'. *BMC Genetics* 10 (1): 59.
- Abungu, G. H. O. 1990. 'Communities on the River Tana, Kenya: an archaeological study of relations between the delta and the river basin, 700–1890 AD'. PhD diss., University of Cambridge.
- Abungu, G. H. O. 1998. 'City states of the East African coast and their maritime contacts'. In *Transformations in Africa: Essays on Africa's Later Past*, edited by G. Connah, 204–218. Leicester: Leicester University Press.
- Allen, J. de V. 1993. 'Swahili origins: Swahili culture and the Shungwaya phenomenon'. Columbus: Ohio University Press.
- Al-Zahery, N., Pala, M., Battaglia, V., Grugni, V., Hamod, M., Hooshiar Kashani, B., *et al.* 2011. 'In search of the genetic footprints of Sumerians: a survey of Y-chromosome and mtDNA variation in the Marsh Arabs of Iraq'. *BMC Evolutionary Biology* 11 (1): 288.
- Bendall, K. E. and Sykes, B. C. 1995. 'Length heteroplasmy in the first hypervariable segment of the human mtDNA control region'. *American Journal of Human Genetics* 57 (2): 248–256.
- Benjamin, J. J. 2008. 'East Africa and the world: the relationship of knowledge and power in the construction of history, race, and identity'. PhD diss., Binghamton University SUNY.

- Berg, F. J. 1968. 'The Swahili community of Mombasa, 1500–1900'. *The Journal of African History* 9 (1): 35–56.
- Berg, G. M. 2006. 'Were there "culture traits" of the Mediterranean and Near Eastern societies in precolonial West Africa?' *The Journal of African History* 47 (3): 491–533.
- Bivand, R. S., Pebesma, E. and Gómez-Rubio, V. 2013. *Applied Spatial Data Analysis with R*. New York: Springer.
- Blench, R. M. 1996. 'The ethnographic evidence for long-distance contacts between Oceania and East Africa'. In *The Indian Ocean in Antiquity*, edited by Julian Reade, 417–438. London: Kegan Paul.
- Boattini, A., Castrì, L., Sarno, S., Useli, A., Cioffi, M., Sazzini, M., *et al.* 2013. 'mtDNA variation in East Africa unravels the history of Afro-Asiatic groups'. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 150 (3): 375–85.
- Brandstaetter, A., Peterson, C. T., Irwin, J. A., Mpoke, S., Koech, D. K., Parson, W. and Parsons, T. J. 2004. 'Mitochondrial DNA control region sequences from Nairobi (Kenya): inferring phylogenetic parameters for the establishment of a forensic database'. *International Journal of Legal Medicine* 118 (5): 294–306.
- Burney, D. A., Robinson, G. S. and Burney, L. P. 2003. 'Sporormiella and the Late Holocene extinctions in Madagascar'. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 100 (19): 10800–5.
- Cadenas, A. M., Zhivotovsky, L. A., Cavalli-Sforza, L. L., Underhill, P. A. and Herrera, R. J. 2008. 'Y-chromosome diversity characterizes the Gulf of Oman'. *European Journal of Human Genetics* 16: 374–86.
- Capredon, M., Brucato, N., Tonasso, L., Choesmel-Cadamuro, V., Ricaut, F.-X., Razafindrazaka, H., *et al.* 2013. 'Tracing Arab-Islamic inheritance in Madagascar: study of the Y-chromosome and mitochondrial DNA in the Antemoro'. *PLoS ONE* 8 (11): e80932.
- Castrì, L., Garagnani, P., Useli, A., Pettener, D. and Luiselli, D. 2008. 'Kenyan crossroads: migration and gene flow in six ethnic groups from eastern Africa'. *Journal of Anthropological Sciences* 86: 189–192.
- Černý, V., Pereira, L., Kujanová, M., Vašíková, A., Hájek, M., Morris, M. and Mulligan, C. J. 2009. 'Out of Arabia: the settlement of Island Soqatra as revealed by mitochondrial and Y chromosome genetic diversity'. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 138 (4): 439–47.
- Chami, F. A. 2002. 'East Africa and the Middle East relationship from the first millennium bc to about 1500 AD'. *Journal des Africanistes* 72 (2): 21–37.
- Chiaroni, J., Underhill, P. A. and Cavalli-Sforza, L. L. 2009. 'Y chromosome diversity, human expansion, drift, and cultural evolution'. *Proceedings of the National Academy of*

Sciences 106 (48): 20174–9.

- Chittick, H. N. 1977. 'The East Coast, Madagascar and the Indian Ocean'. In *The Cambridge History of Africa*, edited by Roland Oliver, 3: 183–231. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dahl, O. C. 1991. *Migration from Kalimantan to Madagascar*. Oslo: Aschehoug AS.
- Dewar, R. E. and Wright, H. T. 1993. 'The culture history of Madagascar'. *Journal of World Prehistory* 7 (4): 417–66.
- Dray, S. and Dufour, A.-B. 2007. 'The ade4 package: implementing the duality diagram for ecologists'. *Journal of Statistical Software* 22 (4): 1–20.
- Dussubieux, L., Kusimba, C. M., Gogte, V., Kusimba, S. B., Gratuze, B. and Oka, R. 2008. 'The trading of ancient glass beads: new analytical data from South Asian and East African soda-alumina glass beads'. *Archaeometry* 50: 797–821.
- Eastman, C. M. 1988. 'Women, slaves, and foreigners: African cultural influences and group processes in the formation of northern Swahili coastal society'. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 21 (1): 1–20.
- Eastman, C. M. 1994. 'Service, slavery ('utumwa') and Swahili social reality'. *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere* 37: 87–107.
- Excoffier, L., Smouse, P. E. and Quattro, J. M. 1992. 'Analysis of molecular variance inferred from metric distances among DNA haplotypes: application to human mitochondrial DNA restriction data'. *Genetics* 131 (2): 479–91.
- Firasat, S., Khaliq, S., Mohyuddin, A., Papaioannou, M., Tyler-Smith, C., Underhill, P. A. and Ayub, Q. 2006. 'Y-chromosomal evidence for a limited Greek contribution to the Pathan population of Pakistan'. *European Journal of Human Genetics* 15 (1): 121–6.
- Fleisher, J. B. 2003. 'Viewing stonetowns from the countryside: an archaeological approach to Swahili regions, AD 800–1500'. PhD diss., University of Virginia.
- Grugni, V., Battaglia, V., Hooshiar Kashani, B., Parolo, S., Al-Zahery, N., Achilli, A., *et al.* 2012. 'Ancient migratory events in the Middle East: new clues from the Y-chromosome variation of modern Iranians'. *PLoS ONE* 7 (7): e41252.
- Hirbo, J. B. 2011. 'Complex genetic history of East African human populations'. PhD diss., University of Maryland.
- Hollis, A. C. 1900. 'Notes on the history of the Vumba'. *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 30: 275–98.
- Horton, M. C. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. C. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. New York: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Ibrahim, M. 1990. *Merchant Capital and Islam*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- International Society of Genetic Genealogy. 2015. 'Y-DNA Haplogroup Tree 2015,

Version: 10.33'. <http://isogg.org/tree/>.

- Jombart, T. 2008. 'Adegenet: a R package for the multivariate analysis of genetic markers'. *Bioinformatics* 24 (11): 1403.
- Jombart, T. and Ahmed, I. 2011. 'Adegenet 1.3–1: new tools for the analysis of genome-wide SNP data'. *Bioinformatics* 27 (21): 3070–1.
- Jost, L. 2008. 'GST and its relatives do not measure differentiation'. *Molecular Ecology* 17 (18): 4015–26.
- Juma, A. M. 1996. 'The Swahili and the Mediterranean worlds: pottery of the Late Roman period from Zanzibar'. *Antiquity* 70: 148–54.
- Juma, A. M. 2004. *Unguja Ukuu on Zanzibar: An Archaeological Study of Early Urbanism*. Uppsala: Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University.
- Kaestle, F. A. and Horsburgh, K. A. 2002. 'Ancient DNA in anthropology: methods, applications, and ethics'. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology Suppl.* 35: 92–130.
- Khurana, P., Aggarwal, A., Mitra, S., Italia, Y. M., Saraswathy, K. N., Chandrasekar, A. and Kshatriya, G. K. 2014. 'Y chromosome haplogroup distribution in Indo-European speaking tribes of Gujarat, Western India'. *PLoS ONE* 9 (3): e90414.
- Kirkman, J. S. 1964. *The Arab City of Gedi: Excavations at the Great Mosque, Architecture, and Finds*. London: Oxford University Press.

p.101

- Kirkman, J. S. 1966. *Ungwana on the Tana*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Kivisild, T., Reidla, M., Metspalu, E., Rosa, A., Brehm, A., Pennarun, E., *et al.* 2004. 'Ethiopian mitochondrial DNA heritage: tracking gene flow across and around the Gate of Tears'. *American Journal of Human Genetics* 75 (5): 752–70.
- Kloss-Brandstätter, A., Pacher, D., Schönherr, S., Weissensteiner, H., Binna, R., Specht, G. and Kronenberg, F. 2010. 'HaploGrep: a fast and reliable algorithm for automatic classification of mitochondrial DNA haplogroups'. *Human Mutation* 32 (1): 25–32.
- Knight, A., Underhill, P. A., Mortensen, H. M., Zhivotovsky, L. A., Lin, A. A., Henn, B. M., *et al.* 2003. 'African Y chromosome and mtDNA divergence provides insight into the history of click languages'. *Current Biology* 13 (6): 464–73.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1993. 'The archaeology and ethnography of iron metallurgy of the Kenya coast'. PhD diss., Bryn Mawr College.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1999a. *The Rise and Fall of Swahili States*. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1999b. 'Material symbols among the precolonial Swahili of the East African coast'. In *Material Symbols: Culture and Economy in Prehistory*, edited by J. E. Robb, 318–341. Carbondale: Center for Archaeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University.
- Kusimba, C. M. 2004. 'Archaeology of slavery in East Africa'. *African Archaeological Review*

- Kusimba, C. M. and Kusimba, S. B. 2005. 'Mosaics and interactions: East Africa, 2000 bp to the present'. In *African Archaeology: A Critical Introduction*, edited by A. B. Stahl, 392–419. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Kusuma, P., Cox, M. P., Pierron, D., Razafindrazaka, H., Brucato, N., Tonasso, L., *et al.* 2015. 'Mitochondrial DNA and the Y chromosome suggest the settlement of Madagascar by Indonesian Sea nomad populations'. *BMC Genomics* 16: 191.
- LaViolette, A. and Fleisher, J. B. 2005. 'The archaeology of sub-Saharan urbanism: cities and their countrysides'. In *African Archaeology: A Critical Introduction*, 327–52. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Lee, E. Y., Shin, K.-J., Rakha, A., Sim, J. E., Park, M. J., Kim, N. Y., Yang, W. I. and Lee, H. Y. 2014. 'Analysis of 22 Y chromosomal STR haplotypes and Y haplogroup distribution in Pathans of Pakistan'. *Forensic Science International: Genetics* 11 (July): 111–16.
- Lewin-Koh, N. J., Bivand, R., Pebesma, E. J., Archer, E., Baddeley, A., Bibiko, H.-J., Callahan, J., *et al.* 2015. *Maptools: Tools for Reading and Handling Spatial Objects (version 0.8.36)*. R. <http://CRAN.R-project.org/package=maptools>.
- Luis, J. R., Rowold, D. J., Regueiro, M., Caeiro, B., Cinnioğlu, C., Roseman, C., *et al.* 2004. 'The Levant versus the Horn of Africa: evidence for bidirectional corridors of human migrations'. *American Journal of Human Genetics* 74 (3): 532–44.
- Martin, B. G. 1974. 'Arab migrations to East Africa in medieval times'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 7 (3): 367–90.
- McKay, W. F. 1975. 'A precolonial history of the southern Kenya coast'. PhD diss., Boston University.
- Mendez, F. L., Karafet, T. M., Krahn, T., Ostrer, H., Soodyall, H. and Hammer, M. F. 2011. 'Increased resolution of Y chromosome haplogroup T defines relationships among populations of the Near East, Europe, and Africa'. *Human Biology* 83 (1): 39–53.
- Middleton, J. 2004. *African Merchants of the Indian Ocean: Swahili of the East African Coast*. Long Grove: Waveland Press.
- Mikkelsen, M., Fendt, L., Röck, A. W., Zimmermann, B., Rockenbauer, E., Hansen, A. J., *et al.* 2012. 'Forensic and phylogeographic characterisation of mtDNA lineages from Somalia'. *International Journal of Legal Medicine* 126 (4): 573–9.
- Msaidie, S., Ducourneau, A., Boetsch, G., Longepied, G., Papa, K., Allibert, C., *et al.* 2011. 'Genetic diversity on the Comoros Islands shows early seafaring as major determinant of human biocultural evolution in the western Indian Ocean'. *European Journal of Human Genetics* 19: 89–94.
- Natural Earth 2015. 'Natural Earth'. <http://www.naturalearthdata.com/> (last accessed 29 July 2015).
- Nei, M. 1972. 'Genetic distance between populations'. *The American Naturalist* 106 (949): 283–92.

- Nei, M. 1987. *Molecular Evolutionary Genetics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Pääbo, S., Poinar, H., Serre, D., Jaenicke-Despres, V., Hebler, J., Rohland, N., *et al.* 2004. 'Genetic analysis from ancient DNA'. *Annual Review of Genetics* 38 (1): 645–79.
- Pijpe, J., de Voogt, A., van Oven, M., Henneman, P., van der Gaag, K. J., Kayser, M. and de Knijff, P. 2013. 'Indian Ocean crossroads: human genetic origin and population structure in the Maldives'. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 151 (1): 58–67.
- Poetsch, M., Wiegand, A., Harder, M., Blöhm, R., Rakotomavo, N., Freitag-Wolf, S. and von Wurmb-Schwark, N. 2013. 'Determination of population origin: a comparison of autosomal SNPs, Y-chromosomal and mtDNA haplogroups using a Malagasy population as example'. *European Journal of Human Genetics* 21 (12): 1423–8.

p.102

- Poloni, E. S., Naciri, Y., Bucho, R., Niba, R., Kervaire, B., Excoffier, L., *et al.* 2009. 'Genetic evidence for complexity in ethnic differentiation and history in East Africa'. *Annals of Human Genetics* 73 (6): 582–600.
- Pouwels, R. L. 2002. 'Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean to 1800: reviewing relations in historical perspective'. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35 (2/3): 385–425.
- Raaum, R. L., Al-Meerri, A. and Mulligan, C. J. 2013. 'Culture modifies expectations of kinship and sex-biased dispersal patterns: a case study of patrilineality and patrilocality in tribal Yemen'. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 150 (4): 526–38.
- Regueiro, M., Cadenas, A. M., Gayden, T., Underhill, P. A. and Herrera, R. J. 2006. 'Iran: tricontinental nexus for Y-chromosome driven migration'. *Human Heredity* 61 (3): 132–43.
- Sahoo, S., Singh, A., Himabindu, G., Banerjee, J., Sitalaximi, T., Gaikwad, S., *et al.* 2006. 'A prehistory of Indian Y chromosomes: evaluating demic diffusion scenarios'. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA* 103 (4): 843–8.
- Semino, O., Santachiara-Benerecetti, A. S., Falaschi, F., Cavalli-Sforza, L. L. and Underhill, P. A. 2002. 'Ethiopians and Khoisan share the deepest clades of the human Y-chromosome phylogeny'. *American Journal of Human Genetics* 70 (1): 265–8.
- Sengupta, S., Zhivotovsky, L. A., King, R., Mehdi, S. Q., Edmonds, C. A., Chow, C.-E.T., *et al.* 2006. 'Polarity and temporality of high-resolution Y-chromosome distributions in India identify both indigenous and exogenous expansions and reveal minor genetic influence of Central Asian pastoralists'. *American Journal of Human Genetics* 78 (2): 202–21.
- Tishkoff, S. A., Gonder, M. K., Henn, B. M., Mortensen, H. M., Knight, A., Gignoux, C., *et al.* 2007. 'History of click-speaking populations of Africa inferred from mtDNA and Y chromosome genetic variation'. *Molecular Biology and Evolution* 24 (10): 2180–95.
- Tofanelli, S., Bertoncini, S., Castri, L., Luiselli, D., Calafell, F., Donati, G. and Paoli, G.

2009. 'On the origins and admixture of Malagasy: new evidence from high resolution analyses of paternal and maternal lineages'. *Molecular Biology and Evolution* 26 (9): 2109–24.
- Tolmacheva, M. 1993. *The Pate Chronicle*. Ann Arbor: Michigan State University Press.
- van Oven, M. and Kayser, M. 2009. 'Updated comprehensive phylogenetic tree of global human mitochondrial DNA variation'. *Human Mutation* 30 (2): E386–E394.
- Venables, W. N. and Ripley, B. D. 2002. *Modern Applied Statistics with S. Fourth Edition*. New York: Springer.
- Vernet, T. 2009. 'Slave trade and slavery on the Swahili coast (1500–1750)'. In *Slavery, Islam and Diaspora*, edited by B. A. Mirzai, I. M. Montana and P. Lovejoy, 37–76. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.
- Whitlock, M. C. 2011. 'G'ST and D Do Not Replace FST'. *Molecular Ecology* 20 (6): 1083–91.
- Wilkinson, J. C. 1981. 'Oman and East Africa: new light on early Kilwan history from the Omani sources'. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 14 (2): 272–305.
- Williams, S. R., Forgey, M. K., Babrowski, K. B. and Batai, K. 2008. 'Mitochondrial genetic patterns at Kilometer 4, Peru'. Society for American Archaeology. Electronic Symposium: Kilometer 4 and the south central Andean Archaic Period.
- Willis, J. 1993. *Mombasa, the Swahili, and the Making of the Mijikenda*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Winter, D. J. 2012. 'Mmod: an R Library for the calculation of population differentiation statistics'. *Molecular Ecology Resources* 12 (6): 1158–60.

Contextualising the Swahili

7

EARLY CONNECTIONS*Nicole Boivin and Alison Crowther*

Among the distinguishing and enduring features of the Swahili populations of the eastern African coast has been their engagement with Indian Ocean commercial and cultural spheres. The emergence of this orientation and broader set of long-distance eastern African connections has been a source of ongoing fascination to generations of scholars (for example, Hornell 1934; Dahl 1951; Chittick 1974; Chittick and Rotberg 1975; Sheriff 1981, 2010; Horton and Middleton 2000; LaViolette 2008; Boivin *et al.* 2013). When and how eastern African coastal populations first took to the sea, and when they first encountered and engaged with peoples travelling from distant regions, are questions that have attracted significant controversy. At the heart of this controversy are discrepancies between the findings and interpretations of different disciplines, scholars and research traditions, many of which remain unresolved. We explore them here, drawing on insights provided by recent fieldwork, and offer perspectives for a re-orientation of research frameworks and questions.

Eastern African islands and the emergence of a maritime orientation

Among the earliest descriptions, famously, of the stretch of coast that would become the Swahili world, is from a first-century CE document known as the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (*PME*) (Casson 1989), a kind of practical guide to those wishing to engage in commercial trade in the Indian Ocean. Among the regions it addresses is the eastern African coast south of the Horn, known as Azania. It describes active trade between the southwestern Arabian Peninsula (in present-day Yemen) and the people of the Azanian coast (Casson 1989: 59–60, *PME* 15–16). The trade appears to have been reasonably regular; enough that sailors from Arabia learned the local language and intermarried with coastal populations. These foreign sailors, coming in large ships, exchanged weapons, tools and glass objects

for ivory, tortoise shell and rhinoceros horn. The main trading port is referred to as Rhapta (Horton and Chami, this volume). While the *Periplus*' short passages offer the most detailed commentary on the Azania region that has been passed down, a small number of other Classical era sources echo its descriptions of active trade relations (for example, Ptolemy's *Geography* [Berggren and Jones 2000], Cosmas Indicopleustes' *Christian Topography* [Freeman-Grenville 1962]).

p.106

One of the great mysteries surrounding descriptions of eastern Africa in the *Periplus* and other documents is the lack of archaeological support for apparent external trade relations. We return to this point below. But the *Periplus* describes not only trade, but also the local maritime-oriented fishing communities that traders encountered, fascinating insight into the kinds of communities on the coast at the start of the Common Era. According to the *Periplus*, the local populations of the island of Menouthias (identified as Pemba, Zanzibar or Mafia; Datto 1970; Chami 1999b; Horton 1996; Horton and Middleton 2000) used sewn boats as well as dugout canoes (Casson 1989: 59–60, *PME* 15). They fished and caught tortoises. The *Periplus* describes the use of basket traps, still in use on Pemba today (Schoff 1912: plate 95; Ingrams 1924, 1931: 64; Casson 1989: 60, *PME* 15; Quintana Morales and Horton 2014; Quintana Morales and Prendergast, this volume).

Archaeological evidence for such communities on the offshore islands remains limited, and does not extend back to the date of the *Periplus*. It comes at present primarily from the Mafia Archipelago (Chami 1999a, 2000, 2004; Crowther *et al.* 2016a; see also Chami and Msemwa 1997). Excavations at Mlongo and the Juani Primary School site (Map 1, p. xxii), for example, demonstrated the presence of settled communities here from around 400 CE (Chami 2000, 2004; Crowther *et al.* 2016a). Recent research has explored the subsistence base at the Juani site, and found a reliance on foraged and particularly marine resources (Crowther *et al.* 2016a). These groups made Kwale ware pottery typical of Early Iron Age mainland populations, but appear to have lacked their domesticated plants and animals.

Evidence for populations dating securely to the first 500 years CE is currently lacking from other major islands. Survey and excavation on Pemba, for example, have not produced archaeology earlier than *c.* seventh century CE (Fleisher 2003). Zanzibar's history is older and more complex. There is at least one cave with archaeology dating back to the Late Pleistocene, revealing occupation by Later Stone Age (LSA) groups who hunted animals no longer present (Kourampas *et al.* 2015; Langley *et al.* 2016; Prendergast *et al.* 2016; Shipton *et al.* 2016). Zanzibar at this point in time, however, was still part of the mainland coast; it was formed as an island due to rising sea levels in the terminal Pleistocene and early Holocene, after which there is no clear evidence for human habitation until about the seventh century CE (Juma 2004; Prendergast *et al.* 2016). On present evidence, it is the EIA archaeological record from Juani Island that fits closest with Menouthias as described in the *Periplus*. By comparison, evidence for mainland populations

with a strong marine subsistence orientation, and in particular the development of offshore fishing, is currently rare prior to the eleventh century (Fleisher *et al.* 2015).

While early fishing and foraging communities were thus present on the island of Juani at least, the radiocarbon dates are not quite early enough for the *Periplus*, and evidence for Indian Ocean trade remains contentious before the seventh century CE. These groups had maritime capabilities, but there is no evidence that they were travelling beyond the coast. The trade mentioned in the *Periplus* appears to have been with other communities such as at Rhapta. As we discuss further below, glass beads potentially dating to the early first millennium CE and possibly the late first millennium bce have been identified at island sites, including on Juani (Chami 2004), but other excavations have not confirmed these finds (for example, Crowther *et al.* 2014), and doubt has been expressed about the dating of these items (Wood 2011). It is possible that these early communities were nonetheless participating in an emerging commercial network, producing goods like shell beads for regional trade, and contributing marine and other resources to networks that perhaps extended further afield.

p.107

First evidence of long-distance connections and Indian Ocean trade

The maritime foraging communities identified so far do not extend as early as the *Periplus*, and the same is true of evidence for trade. There is a lack of reliable archaeological evidence for connections prior to at least the seventh century CE (Juma 1996, 2004). While stray finds, and artefacts emerging from concentrated archaeological excavations, have been drawn upon to argue for earlier trading links, these remain contentious. Finds of imported glass beads and ceramics have been suggested for ‘LSA/Neolithic’ contexts dating to the first millennium bce at Kuumbi Cave on Zanzibar (Chami 2001, 2009; Sinclair *et al.* 2006), Kinunda and Ukunju Caves on Juani island (Chami 2004), and for first–sixth-century CE Early Iron Age contexts at Mkukutu-Kibiti and Kivinja on the central Tanzanian coast (Chami 1999b, 2003). However, in all cases there are issues with stratigraphic and chronometric affiliations (Sutton 2002; Chami 2003: 95; Sinclair 2007; Wood 2011: 24–5; Crowther *et al.* 2014; Shipton *et al.* 2016; see also Wood cited in Chami 2004: 80–1). Drawn into these arguments have been suggested finds of Asian fauna; domestic chicken (*Gallus gallus*) has been identified as early as the third millennium bce, from sites on Zanzibar (Chami 2001, 2009). This work has not been backed up by more recent zooarchaeological and biomolecular studies (Shipton *et al.* 2016; Prendergast *et al.* 2016), which point to the likelihood of misidentification of native guinea fowl (*Numida melagris*) and other species.

Drawing on more reliable finds, the chronology for eastern Africa's entry into Indian Ocean trade is from the seventh century CE onward, when both imported artefacts and translocated Asian domesticated and commensal species start to reliably appear. These include relatively abundant quantities of Middle Eastern ceramics including 'Sasanian Islamic' turquoise glazed wares, white glazed wares and torpedo jars, as well as rarer Chinese ceramics (for example, Chittick 1984; Horton 1996; Juma 2004; Fleisher and LaViolette 2013). Glass and stone beads (for example, Wood 2011, this volume; Wood *et al.* 2016) also appear, together with imported metal artefacts (Horton and Blurton 1988; Kusimba *et al.* 1994; Crowther *et al.* 2015). These concentrate especially in port and settlement sites like Unguja Ukuu (Juma 2004; Crowther *et al.* 2015), Tumbe (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013), Shanga (Horton 1996) and Chibuene (Sinclair *et al.* 2012). The first Asian fauna, including chicken and black rat (*Rattus rattus*), appear in faunal sequences beginning, for the most part, in the seventh–eighth centuries (Horton 1996; Juma 2004; Boivin *et al.* 2013, 2014). Domesticated cat (*Felis silvestris*), which likely arrived via maritime routes, appears to reach eastern Africa in this period (Juma 2004; Ottoni *et al.* 2017). Domesticated Asian crops like rice (*Oryza sativa*), mungbean (*Vigna radiata*), wheat (*Triticum* sp.) and cotton (*Gossypium* sp.) also arrive (Crowther *et al.* 2014, 2016a,b; Walshaw 2015).

At present, it seems reasonable to conclude that earlier trade did happen, but is still unconfirmed archaeologically. Descriptions in the *Periplus* have been backed up by archaeological research in other parts of the Indian Ocean (Reade 1996; Seland 2010), sometimes quite recently. The famous Indian site of Muziris, described in the *Periplus* (Casson 1989: 83–4, *PME* 53–6) and other Classical-era documents, was sought for years before being discovered inland (at a site called Pattanam) during geoarchaeological survey (Shajan *et al.* 2004; see also Cherian 2007, 2010; Cherian *et al.* 2009). Given differences in the degree of urbanisation of the southwestern Indian and eastern African coasts at this time, Rhapta was almost certainly smaller and less built up than Muziris. Indeed, Rhapta may not have been a set location; some have suggested that it was a shifting location where African communities and Middle Eastern traders met at specific times to engage in trade (Sheriff 2010).

p.108

Another factor may have been the kinds of items traded; many mentioned in the *Periplus* would leave little trace archaeologically or necessarily indicate trade. Certainly, exported goods like ivory, shell and bone are present across a range of time periods and, unless found in quantity, are not clear markers of export trade. Imported goods may not have circulated widely (Swahili populations of the second millennium CE, for example, did not trade valued imported artefacts to inland populations with whom they engaged in commerce [LaViolette 2008], though this may have been a later development given findings of late first-millennium imported material culture at Tanzanian inland sites [Chami 1994], the Pangani basin [Walz 2010] and the Limpopo basin [Wood 2011]).

Alternatively, it is possible that early first-millennium trade focused on a small number of populations at locales not yet identified, such as Rhapta, or that have been impacted by coastal erosional processes. Another consideration is that much, if not all, of *Periplus*-era trading infrastructure of eastern Africa, which probably extended inland, was likely in the hands of relatively small-scale societies, as discussed below.

Connections to Southeast Asia

Another key example of discrepancies between sources concerns Madagascar. The modern culture of Madagascar provides ample testimony to the island's long-term engagement with the broader Indian Ocean world. Culturally, linguistically and genetically, Madagascar shows strong links to Southeast Asia (for example, Grandidier 1858; Van der Truuk 1865; Dahl 1991; V  rin and Wright 1999; Hurles *et al.* 2005; Allibert 2008; Cox *et al.* 2012). Indeed, linguistic interpretations point to a first-millennium CE colonisation of Madagascar by Austronesian-language speaking populations, potentially from Borneo (Reland 1708; Dahl 1951, 1991; Adelaar 1989, 1995, 2009). Recent genetic evidence suggests a roughly equal contribution to Malagasy ancestry from both African and Southeast Asian sources (Hurles *et al.* 2005; Cox *et al.* 2012). Malagasy culture, agriculture and technology retain numerous Southeast Asian elements that support this dual colonisation scenario (Hornell 1934; V  rin 1975; Radimilahy 1988, 1993; Tanaka 1997; V  rin and Wright 1999; Allibert 2008).

Textual and archaeological sources have been used to support the story of colonisation and trade developed from linguistic, genetic and cultural lines of evidence. Some have pushed evidence for Austronesian influence on the eastern African coast back to pre-Common Era. For example, findings of banana phytoliths in central and western Africa (Mbida *et al.* 2000, 2001, 2006; Lejju *et al.* 2006) have been taken to suggest early Southeast Asian crossings (Blench 2010). Discussion of a cinnamon trade by Pliny in his *Natural History* (Book XII: cap. 42), first century CE, has been interpreted to suggest the presence of Southeast Asian traders on the eastern African coast (Miller 1969). All of these suggestions have, however, been disputed (Murray and Warmington 1967; Neumann and Hildebrand 2009; Vansina 2003; Fuller and Boivin 2009). Early African banana finds have been difficult to replicate, even in the same regions as previous finds, despite concerted effort (Neumann *et al.* 2012). Even if present, there is no necessary reason to believe that the earliest banana cultivars arrived via the coast. Indeed, an arrival along more northern routes from India seems more likely (Boivin *et al.* 2014), given that archaeobotanical and other datasets point to connections between northeastern Africa and India by the early second millennium bce (Boivin *et al.* 2009; Boivin and Fuller 2009; Fuller and Boivin 2009; Fuller *et al.* 2011). The Pliny cinnamon trade as a reference to Austronesians is similarly weak and difficult to confirm. The kinds of simple outrigger canoes that seem to be described in Pliny ('rafts'), on which cinnamon is carried 'over vast tracts of sea', do

not fit with increasing evidence for large Southeast Asian ships by the early first millennium CE, and perhaps earlier (Manguin 1993), the use of which seems more likely for the journey to Africa.

p.109

Archaeological evidence for Southeast Asian connections in the first millennium CE has been similarly lacking. This absence is particularly notable for Madagascar, where linguistic data strongly suggest Indonesian colonisation around the seventh–eighth century (Adelaar 2009). This broadly agrees with the first secure evidence for settlement of Madagascar (Wright and Fanony 1992; Dewar and Wright 1993; Dewar and Richard 2012), although earlier archaeology, including potential occupation back to the second millennium bce (Dewar *et al.* 2013; Anderson forthcoming) has been proposed. What is remarkable is that early settlement sites on Madagascar have so far produced no clear artefactual links with Southeast Asia, despite much searching (Dewar and Wright 1993; Reade 1996; Dewar 1997, 2014). As Dewar and Wright (1993: 442) observed, ‘. . . although there are tantalizing hints, we can trace no direct contact between Madagascar and the eastern Indian Ocean’. Thus, as with the *Periplus* evidence, we find a disagreement between disciplinary sources, in this case between linguistic and genetic data on the one hand, and archaeological data on the other.

Recent archaeobotanical research may have achieved a breakthrough, however. Systematic flotation at 18 sites across the eastern African coast and islands, including Madagascar, has revealed a strong contrast between archaeobotanical assemblages from eastern African coastal and island settlements, as compared with those on Madagascar and the Comoros (Crowther *et al.* 2016b). Coastal and near-coastal island sites dating to the seventh–eighth centuries CE (for example, Unguja Ukuu and Tumbe in the Zanzibar Archipelago, and various sites in the Kilifi hinterland, Kenya) produced assemblages dominated by African crops like sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor*) and pearl millet (*Pennisetum glaucum*), though small quantities of rice and Middle Eastern crops such as wheat were also found. In contrast, the earliest assemblages on Madagascar and the Comoros (as studied at Mahilaka in northwest Madagascar, and Old Sima on Anjouan) were overwhelmingly dominated by Asian crops, with only minor quantities of African crops. The main Asian crop was rice, but mungbean and cotton were also present. The presence of this pattern, at least on the Comoros, from the very beginnings of human settlement, would seem to support the arrival of the Asian crops via colonisation rather than trade with local African populations. Comparison with global archaeobotanical datasets and historical and linguistic data strongly point to Southeast Asia as the origin of these crops (Crowther *et al.* 2016b). Thus, crops may well provide the first signature of Southeast Asian arrivals in Africa that can be traced archaeologically, demonstrating their presence in the Comoros and Madagascar from the eighth century CE onwards.

While this fits with expectations, and may finally allow consensus between

archaeological and linguistic sources, the new evidence also holds a surprise: the archaeobotanical study revealed an earlier presence of Asian crops in the Comoros (eighth century CE) than in Madagascar (tenth century). Many models have explicitly argued for (Beaujard 2011), or implicitly expected (Cox *et al.* 2012), that Southeast Asians arrived directly in Madagascar from Southeast Asia, perhaps stopping off but certainly not settling along the way. However, the Comoros archaeobotanical data strongly suggest that the earliest known Comorian settlements, of the Dembeni phase (eighth–tenth century), were occupied at least in part by Southeast Asians or people with recent Southeast Asian ancestry. This would be in spite of the fact that Comorian populations today do not bear significant linguistic or genetic traces of Southeast Asian ancestry (Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993; Msaidie *et al.* 2010). These Comorian communities fished and grew rice, built simple homes made of wattle and daub, and engaged in trade that brought Middle Eastern and Chinese ceramics, glass beads and other exotica to their shores (Wright *et al.* 1984; Allibert *et al.* 1989; Wright *et al.* 1992; Allibert and Vérin 1996). Notably, shell-impressed wares dominate Dembeni-phase ceramic assemblages in the Comoros, particularly at sites in the eastern islands nearest Madagascar, and where the archaeobotanical signature of Asian crops is also strongest. These wares are distinctive from the triangular-incised pots typically produced on the mainland and islands at this time (see Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2011), although small quantities of shell-impressed sherds occur on the mainland coast, just as some triangular-incised sherds occur in Dembeni sites. Some archaeologists have noted general stylistic similarities between these shell-decorated wares and those produced in parts of island Southeast Asia (for example, Allibert 2008; Martin 2010), although a direct relationship has never been demonstrated.

p.110

The fact that Asian crops appear several centuries earlier in the Comoros than in Madagascar may reflect lack of sampling on seventh–ninth century Malagasy sites, with only two such sites in the current dataset (Crowther *et al.* 2016b). It is possible, probable even, that further investigation of earlier sites on Madagascar will produce earlier Asian crops. On the other hand, an earlier settlement of the Comoros than Madagascar is supported by some historical linguistic models, which have argued that the remarkable homogeneity of Bantu loanwords in Malagasy can only have come about through initial settlement and mixing of Austronesian and Bantu language-speaking populations somewhere outside Madagascar (Deschamps 1960; Adelaar 2009, 2012). Both the Comoros and mainland eastern Africa have been suggested as possible locations of such initial settlement and demographic mixing. As noted above, some elements of early Comorian material culture, such as ceramics but also iron-making furnaces, have been linked to Southeast Asia (Allibert 1999, 2008), though not necessarily with widespread agreement. But the overall pattern suggests that Southeast Asians could well have settled the Comoros islands, and been subsequently swamped, linguistically and genetically, by Bantu populations from mainland Africa.

New research questions

Research on the earliest phases of connectivity on the Swahili coast is still in its infancy, and we may expect new insights to be gained in future years, particularly through the application of powerful novel methods in archaeological science and ancient DNA studies. These methods could hold the key to resolution of discrepancies between textual, linguistic, genetic and archaeological sources. The capacity for disciplinary disagreements to challenge conceptual models and theoretical frameworks, however, should also be born in mind. Achieving better understanding of the emergence of connectivity on eastern African coasts and islands may come as much from reframing our questions, as applying new methods to old questions. With this in mind, we highlight some areas of potential interest for archaeologists working on the Swahili coast.

Anthropogenic shaping of eastern African ecologies

There has been minimal interest in examining how early contact with the wider Indian Ocean not only transformed societies, but also eastern African ecologies and agricultural systems (Walsh 2007; Cheke 2010; Lane 2010; Dewar 2014; Crowther *et al.* 2015; see also Coutu 2011). However, recent research demonstrates the arrival not only of a range of Asian crops, but also exotic animals, domesticated and commensal (Boivin *et al.* 2013; Eager 2014). All of these introductions almost certainly had broader impacts. Rice agriculture, for example, became a key focus of subsistence on Pemba, at least for some centuries (Walshaw 2015), and is today a central focus of both domestic and export crop production on Madagascar. The kinds of paddy system agriculture carried out on Madagascar have broad ecological impacts, shaping landscapes, redistributing species and, when carried out on a sufficiently large scale, altering CO₂ emissions. Such rice cultivation both demands, and in turn helps to support, larger populations and greater social complexity. Coconut palm was likely also translocated to eastern Africa by people, potentially through multiple routes (Allibert 1999; Gunn *et al.* 2011). The introduction of coconut palm in other regions has had known impacts to floristic diversity and soil characteristics (Young *et al.* 2010), and may have been important in reshaping tropical forest ecologies along the Madagascar coast where it grows today abundantly as a semi-wild species.

p.111

Other domesticates may have played a similar role in the longer-term shaping of eastern African ecological and agricultural systems. Introduced zebu cattle (*Bos indicus*), for example, may have helped make African cattle more drought adapted and disease resistant (Boivin *et al.* 2014). Chickens introduced to Africa gradually became a key subsistence species, but also an important object of symbolism and ritual.

Commensal species are also important. Archaeological and genetic data demonstrate the historical introduction of a number of Asian commensal small mammals, including the black rat (*Rattus rattus*), house mouse (*Mus musculus*) and Asian house shrew (*Suncus murinus*). These appear to have reached eastern Africa through coastal trade links (Jones *et al.* 2013; Eager 2014). Of significant interest is the potential for such species, and particularly the black rat, to carry disease and alter environments, especially island environments. Emerging data from Pemba suggest that the introduction of the black rat may have led to species extinctions and extirpations. Introduced rats can also have broader ecological impacts, transforming forests and vegetation, as has been noted elsewhere (for example, Hunt 2007).

Indian Ocean trade may have had other environmental impacts. The removal of mangrove forest, with large-scale shipping of trees to the Gulf starting in the late first, early second millennia, would almost certainly have impacted marine ecosystems and coastal geomorphology. Wild animal species targeted for trade, such as elephants or tortoises, may have suffered declines and even local extirpations. According to Casson (1989: 101), tortoise shell, sought from various parts of the Indian Ocean, received more attention in the *Periplus* than any other trade item, suggesting that local declines in targeted species (for example, hawksbill sea turtle, *Eretmochelys imbricata*, green turtle, *Chelonia mydas*) may have been inevitable. Centuries – if not millennia – of hunting these species for trade and subsistence has depleted populations, with likely effects on the structure and function of marine ecosystems (Frazier 1980, 2003). The ivory trade in eastern Africa, which the *Periplus* informs us is at least 2000 years old, contributed over the long term to changes in vegetation cover and erosion rates by reducing the number of large herbivores in regional ecosystems (Håkansson 2004). How early such effects can be traced is unknown.

Early Indian Ocean slave trade

While the slave trade is a central topic in discussions of later trade along the Swahili coast (for example, Alpers 1975; Cooper 1977; Lovejoy 1983; Sheriff 1987; Manning 1990; Vernet 2009), it remains largely overlooked in analyses of the region's earliest phases of Indian Ocean connectivity (Kusimba 2004). The *Periplus* mentions export of slaves from Somalia (Casson 1989: 55, 59, *PME* 8, 13), but does not list slaves among commodities exported from the Azania coast, and this has likely played a role in their omission from accounts of early trade there. Slavery may well not have been an important factor in early eastern African trade – but in the absence of textual sources, which are exceedingly minimal for the early first millennium, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions. African slaves, among others, were certainly brought *en masse* to the marshes of southern Iraq in the ninth century, where they laboured to extract salt and reclaim land. This led to the famous Zanj Rebellion between 869 and 883, though this was preceded by rebellions going back to the seventh century (Benjamin 2008).

Slavery may well have been a key factor in the presence of Southeast Asians on the eastern African coast. Slaves are among the commodities that Southeast Asian sailors sought, according to Islamic sources (Trimingham 1975; Freeman-Grenville 1981). Arab documents record slave trading and raiding by people called the *Wak Wak*, linked to Southeast Asia and Madagascar (Ferrand 1919; Taylor 1976; V  rin 1986). Blench (2014) sees eastern African slaves as being regularly imported into South, Southeast and East Asia via Arab intermediaries from at least the seventh century CE. As he argues, the legacy of this trade is still visible in the many African diaspora communities located around the Indian Ocean today, which retain aspects of African culture such as musical instruments (Blench 2014). Such material transfers may provide a means of tracing early slave movements in the absence of written sources.

p.112

Alternatively, Allibert (2005) suggests that African slaves were not taken back to Southeast Asia, but employed in Madagascar and perhaps the Comoros in, for example, mining iron for trade. He suggests distinctive slave trading corridors involving Arabs and Islamicised Southeast Asians, the latter focused on the Comoros and Madagascar. Both locations have long histories of slave trading that may date back to their founding settlements. While exceedingly difficult to identify archaeologically, slavery should nonetheless not be overlooked by those examining early connections.

The role of small-scale communities

Complex societies were undoubtedly of central importance to the emergence and expansion of early international trade, providing large markets, infrastructure, and finance necessary to mobilise and sell commodities at an increasingly global scale. Yet, it is often overlooked that the value attached to ancient commodities derived in large part from their extraction from zones beyond the reach of early states (Helms 1988). Obtaining these commodities meant not only travelling long distances, but often also drawing on the skills and knowledge contained within small-scale societies from these zones. While the nature of relationships established between foreign traders and local communities in Africa varied, there was a fine line between exchange and exploitation, particularly as trade became more systematic and intensive. Early on, though, foragers' and pastoralists' mobility offered them flexibility, and likely meant that transactions needed to benefit all parties.

In eastern Africa, it is likely that marine commodities, including tortoise shell, were obtained by maritime foragers as described in the *Periplus*. The *Periplus* actually describes the trapping of tortoises on Menouthias (Casson 1989: 59–60, *PME* 15), and excavations at the fourth–fifth century Juani Primary School site discussed above (Chami 2000, 2004; Crowther *et al.* 2016a), and at various seventh–tenth century sites across the coast, have

unearthed evidence for tortoise exploitation (Wright *et al.* 1992; Horton 1996; Juma 2004; Badenhorst *et al.* 2011). Ivory, meanwhile, was likely obtained by relatively mobile, inland hunter-pastoralists (Kusimba and Kusimba 2005). Descriptions of the later ivory trade make it clear that such groups had a central role to play in procurement, and that elephant hunting and the movement of ivory to the coast necessitated mobility over many months (Alpers 1975). In the historical era, such work was undertaken by hunting parties, usually organised by chiefs (Alpers 1975).

Production for trade

Both regional trading systems and local production for trade remain poorly understood for the earliest phases of human activity on the coast. Early finds of cowry shells at sites far into the interior nonetheless support the establishment of trade links between coast and interior from the late first millennium bce (Leakey 1966; Nelson 1993; Mutoro 1998; Wright 2005). Agriculturalists, pastoralists and hunter-gatherers (and combinations thereof) were undoubtedly engaged in local trade long before the first Indian Ocean traders arrived. How these local systems intersected with, and shaped and were shaped by, international commercial networks, needs greater consideration.

p.113

Early regional trade between communities occupying the coast and interior likely involved a range of goods including foodstuffs, animal skins, ivory, rhinoceros horn, honey wax, marine shell and ostrich eggshell beads, and iron implements, and goods obtained through Indian Ocean trade such as glass beads (Abungu and Mutoro 1993; Kusimba 1999; Wright 2005). Such exchange was probably not restricted to material goods but also included marriage partners. Indeed, it is suggested that a key motivation of early regional trade was the creation of kinship ties between groups occupying different ecozones, with access to different resources, providing groups with buffers in times of environmental uncertainty (Wright 2005).

While textual sources indicate that the focus of trade was on raw materials and Indian Ocean imports, coastal communities produced commodities for local redistribution. In particular, shell disc beads appear to have been a key item manufactured for such trade (Flexner *et al.* 2008; Fleisher and LaViolette 2013). These beads are found on coastal sites dating from the seventh century onwards, sometimes in association with ceramic ‘bead grinders’ – pottery sherds incised with linear grooves – indicating local, probably household level production (for example, Chittick 1974; Horton 1996; Juma 2004; Flexner *et al.* 2008). Beads were manufactured on a variety of shell types, including marine shell (probably *Anadara* sp.), land snail shell (*Achatina* sp.), and ostrich eggshell (*Struthio* sp.). Marine shell beads appear at hinterland sites within the same time frame, attesting to their movement through, and importance to, local exchange networks connecting coast and hinterland, most likely in return for inland goods (Abungu 1989; Chami 1994; Walz 2010;

Helm *et al.* 2012). The recent recovery of similar shell disc beads from the Early Iron Age levels at the Juani Primary School site suggests they may have featured in earlier local networks (Crowther *et al.* 2016a). While this trade may have been motivated to acquire novel goods, it could have helped cement exchange-based social networks between migrating Iron Age groups, perhaps an important risk-reduction strategy during early colonisation of the offshore islands (Crowther *et al.* 2016a).

Among the perishable goods that may have been produced for regional (and inter-regional) trade, now becoming more apparent owing to concerted archaeobotanical studies on the coast, are textiles. Small quantities of cotton (*Gossypium* sp.) appear at coastal sites from the seventh century CE, though such remains mainly become abundant from the eleventh century (Crowther *et al.* 2014, 2016b; Walshaw 2015). Ceramic and chlorite schist spindle whorls also begin to occur during this later period, suggesting that cloth production may not have been a major commodity until the second millennium CE (for example, Chittick 1974; Fleisher and LaViolette 2013; Horton 1996; Wynne-Jones 2016; LaViolette, Craft, this volume). Unfortunately, owing to the paucity of archaeobotanical evidence from early first-millennium sites, we have no clear picture yet of whether such production is even earlier on the coast. Indeed, as with detecting many perishable items thought to be part of early trade, archaeological visibility remains a major issue.

Conclusions

Much remains to be learned about the early connections of the Swahili coast, and there is little doubt that the very partial analysis presented here will be augmented and transformed in future years. Recent work has, however, led to new insights and perhaps deeper conservatism about the age of long-distance connections with the coast. Eastern African trade with the Indian Ocean world need not extend thousands of years into the past to be interesting, however. The entry of what would come to be known as the Swahili coast into Indian Ocean trading systems, a process that probably began no more than 2000 years ago, led to fundamental transformations of eastern African societies, landscapes and ecosystems in a relatively short period. Both novel methods and new perspectives hold the keys to a better understanding of these changes, as does more fieldwork beyond large settlement sites such as Shanga, Tumbe, Unguja Ukuu and Chibuene. Eastern Africa's 'early connections' thus retain their ability to captivate and challenge a new generation of scholars.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Stephanie and Adria for the invitation to contribute to this volume, and to the members of the Sealinks Project whose fieldwork, analyses, interpretations and discussion have helped shape this chapter. Our work is supported by the European Research Council (206148-SEALINKS). Alison Crowther acknowledges the support of fellowships from the British Academy and The University of Queensland.

References

- Abungu, G. H. O. 1989. 'Communities on the River Tana, Kenya: an archaeological study of relations between the delta and the river basin, 700–1890 AD'. PhD diss., University of Cambridge.
- Abungu, G. H. O. and Mutoro, H. W. 1993. 'Coast-interior settlements and social relations in the Kenya coastal hinterland'. In *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns*, edited by T. Shaw, P. Sinclair, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, 694–704. London: Routledge.
- Adelaar, A. 1989. 'Malay influence on Malagasy: linguistic and culture-historical inferences'. *Oceanic Linguistics* 28 (1): 1–46.
- Adelaar, A. 1995. 'Asian roots of the Malagasy: a linguistic perspective'. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsche-Indië* 151 (3): 325–56.
- Adelaar, A. 2009. 'Towards an integrated theory about the Indonesian migrations to Madagascar'. In *Ancient Human Migrations: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach*, edited by I. Peiros, P. Peregrine and M. Feldman, 149–72. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.
- Adelaar, A. 2012. 'Malagasy phonological history and Bantu influence'. *Oceanic Linguistics* 51: 123–59.
- Allibert, C. 1999. 'The archaeology of knowledge: Austronesian influences in the western Indian Ocean'. In *Archaeology and Language III: Artefacts, Languages and Texts*, edited by R. Blench and M. Spriggs, 269–76. London: Routledge.
- Allibert, C. 2005. 'La profondeur de l'incidence du Continent Noir sur L'Océan Indien Occidental'. In *Regards sur L'Afrique et L'Océan Indien*, edited by S. Fuma, 15–34. Paris: Saint-Denis.
- Allibert, C. 2008. 'Austronesian migration and the establishment of the Malagasy civilization'. *Diogenes* 55 (2): 7–16.
- Allibert, C. and Vérin, P. 1996. 'The early pre-Islamic history of the Comores Islands: links with Madagascar and Africa'. In *The Indian Ocean in Antiquity*, edited by J. Reade, 461–9. London: Kegan Paul International.
- Allibert, C., Argant, A. and Argant, J. 1989. 'Le site de Dembeni (Mayotte, Archipel des Comores). Mission 1984'. *Études Océan Indien* 11: 63–172.
- Alpers, E. A. 1975. *Ivory and Slaves: Changing Pattern of International Trade in East Central Africa*

to the Nineteenth Century. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Anderson, A. J., Camens, A., Clark, G. and Haberle, S. in press. 'Investigating pre-modern colonisation of the Indian Ocean: the remote islands enigma'. In *Connecting Continents: Archaeology and History in the Indian Ocean*, edited by K Seetah. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Badenhorst, S., Sinclair, P., Ekblom, A. and Plug, I. 2011. 'Faunal remains from Chibuene, an Iron Age coastal trading station in Central Mozambique'. *Southern African Humanities* 23: 1–15.
- Beaujard, P. 2011. 'The first migrants to Madagascar and their introduction of plants: linguistic and ethnological evidence'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa*, 46: 169–89.
- Benjamin, J. 2008. 'Zanj (Zinj, Zang)'. In *Encyclopedia of the African Diaspora: Origins, Experiences and Culture, A–C. Volume 1*, edited by Carole Boyce Davies, 1000–3. Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO.

p.115

- Berggren, J. L. and Jones, A. 2000. 'Ptolemy's *Geography*: an annotated translation of the theoretical chapters'. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Blench, R. 2010. 'Evidence for the Austronesian voyages in the Indian Ocean'. In *The Global Origins and Development of Seafaring*, edited by A. Anderson, J. H. Barrett and K. V. Boyle, 239–48. Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.
- Blench, R. 2014. 'Tracking the origins of African slaves in the Indian Ocean through personal names: the evidence of Sumatra records'.
<http://www.rogerblench.info/Archaeology/Indian%20Ocean/Tracking%20the%20origins>
- Boivin, N. and Fuller, D. Q. 2009. 'Shell middens, ships and seeds: exploring coastal subsistence, maritime trade and the dispersal of domesticates in and around the ancient Arabian Peninsula'. *Journal of World Prehistory* 22 (2): 113–18.
- Boivin, N., Blench, R. and Fuller, D. Q. 2009. 'Archaeological, linguistic and historical sources on ancient seafaring: a multidisciplinary approach to the study of early maritime contact and exchange in the Arabian Peninsula'. In *The Evolution of Human Populations in Arabia*, edited by M. D. Petraglia and J. Rose, 251–78. New York: Springer.
- Boivin, N., Crowther, A., Helm, R. and Fuller, D. Q. 2013. 'East Africa and Madagascar in the Indian Ocean world'. *Journal of World Prehistory* 26: 213–81.
- Boivin, N., Crowther, A., Prendergast, M. and Fuller, D. Q. 2014. 'Indian Ocean food globalisation and Africa'. *African Archaeological Review* 31 (4): 547–81.
- Casson, L. 1989. *Periplus Maris Erythraei: Text with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Chami, F. A. 1994. *The Tanzanian Coast in the First Millennium ad: An Archaeology of the Iron-Working, Farming Communities*. Studies in African Archaeology 7. Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis.

- Chami, F. A. 1999a. 'The Early Iron Age on Mafia Island and its relationship with the mainland'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 34: 1–10.
- Chami, F. A. 1999b. 'Roman beads from the Rufiji Delta, Tanzania: first incontrovertible archaeological link with the *Periplus*'. *Current Anthropology* 40 (2): 237–41.
- Chami, F. A. 2000. 'Further archaeological research on Mafia Island'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 35: 208–14.
- Chami, F. 2001. 'Chicken bones from a Neolithic limestone cave site, Zanzibar: contact between East Africa and Asia'. In *People, Contacts, and the Environment in the Africa Past*, edited by F. Chami, G. Pwiti and C. Radimilahy, 84–97. Dar es Salaam: University of Dar es Salaam.
- Chami, F. A. 2003. 'Early ironworking communities on the East African coast: excavations at Kivinja, Tanzania'. In *East African Archaeology: Foragers, Potters, Smiths and Traders*, edited by S. Kusimba and C. Kusimba, 87–97. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Chami, F. A. 2004. 'The archaeology of the Mafia Archipelago, Tanzania'. In *African Archaeology Network: Reports and Views*, edited by F. Chami, G. Pwiti and C. Radimilahy, 73–101. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press.
- Chami, F. 2009. *Zanzibar and the Swahili Coast from c. 30,000 Years Ago*. Dar es Salaam: E&D Vision Publishing.
- Chami, F. A. and Msemwa, P. J. 1997. 'The excavation of Kwale Island, South of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania'. *Nyame Akuma* 48: 45–56.
- Cheke, A. 2010. 'The timing of arrival of humans and their commensal animals on western Indian Ocean oceanic islands'. *Phelsuma* 18: 38–69.
- Cherian, P. 2007. 'The Muziris Heritage Project excavations at Pattanam, 2007'. *Journal of Indian Ocean Archaeology* 4: 1–10.
- Cherian, P. 2010. 'Pattanam to challenge eurocentric notions and help rewrite the history of Indian Ocean trade'. *Journal of Indian Ocean Archaeology* 6: 153–9.
- Cherian, P., Ravi-Prasad, G., Dutta, K., Ray, D., Selvakumar, V. and Shajan, D. 2009. 'Chronology of Pattanam: a multi-cultural port site on the Malabar coast'. *Current Science* 97 (2): 236–40.
- Chittick, H. N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Chittick, H. N. 1984. *Manda: Excavations at an Island Port on the Kenya Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa
- Chittick, H. N. and Rotberg, I. (Eds) 1975. *East Africa and the Orient: Cultural Synthesis in Pre-Colonial Times*. London: Africana.

- Cooper, F. 1977. *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa*. London: Yale University Press.
- Coutu, A. N. 2011. 'Tracing the links between elephants, humans, and landscapes during the nineteenth-century East African ivory trade: a bioarchaeological study'. PhD diss., University of York.
- Cox, M., Nelson, M. G., Tumonggor, M. K., Ricaut, F.-X. and Sudoyo, H. 2012. 'A small cohort of island Southeast Asian women founded Madagascar'. *Proceedings of the Royal Society Biological Sciences Series B* 279: 2761–8.
- Crowther, A., Horton, M. C., Kotarba-Morley, A., Prendergast, M., Quintana Morales, E., Wood, M., *et al.* 2014. 'Iron Age agriculture, fishing and trade in the Mafia Archipelago, Tanzania: new evidence from Ukunju Cave'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 49: 21–44.
- Crowther, A., Veall, M. A., Boivin, N., Horton, M. C., Kotarba-Morley, A., Fuller, D. Q., *et al.* 2015. 'Use of Zanzibar copal (*Hymanaea Verrucosa* Gaertn.) as incense at Unguja Ukuu, Tanzania in the 7–8th Century CE: chemical insights into trade and Indian Ocean interactions'. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 53: 374–90.
- Crowther, A., Faulkner, P., Prendergast, M., Quintana Morales, E., Horton, M. C., Wilmsen, E., *et al.* 2016a. 'Coastal subsistence, maritime trade, and the colonization of small offshore islands in eastern African prehistory'. *Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology* 11: 211–37.
- Crowther, A., Lucas, L., Helm, R., Horton, M. C., Shipton, C., Wright, H. T., *et al.* 2016b. 'Ancient crops provide first archaeological signature of the westward Austronesian expansion'. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 113: 6635–40.
- Dahl, O. C. 1951. *Malgache et Maanjan: Une Comparaison Linguistique*. Oslo: Egede-Instituttet.
- Dahl, O. C. 1991. *Migration from Kalimantan to Madagascar*. Oslo: Norwegian University Press.
- Datoo, B. A. 1970. 'Rhapta: the location and importance of East Africa's first port'. *Azania* 5 (1): 65–75.
- Deschamps, H. 1960. *Histoire De Madagascar*. Paris: Berger-Levrault.
- Dewar, R. 1997. 'Does it matter that Madagascar is an island?' *Human Ecology* 25: 481–9.
- Dewar, R. 2014. 'Early human settlers and their impact on Madagascar's landscapes'. In *Conservation and Environmental Management in Madagascar*, edited by I. R. Scales, 44–64. London: Routledge.
- Dewar, R. and Richard, A. 2012. 'Madagascar: a history of arrivals, what happened, and will happen next'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41: 495–517.
- Dewar, R. and Wright, H. T. 1993. 'The culture history of Madagascar'. *Journal of World Prehistory* 7: 417–66.
- Dewar, R., Radimilahy, C., Wright, H. T., Jacobs, Z., Kelly, G. O. and Berna, F. 2013. 'Stone tools and foraging in northern Madagascar Challenge Holocene extinction

- models'. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 110: 12583–8.
- Eager, H. 2014. 'Using commensals as proxies for historical inference in the Indian Ocean: genetic and zooarchaeological perspectives'. PhD diss., University of Oxford.
- Ferrand, G. 1919. *Le K'ouen-Louen et Les Anciennes Interocéaniques dans les Mers du Sud*. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale.
- Fleisher, J. 2003. 'Viewing stonetowns from the countryside: an archaeological approach to Swahili regional systems, AD 800–1500'. PhD diss., University of Virginia.
- Fleisher, J. and LaViolette, A. 2013. 'The early Swahili trade village of Tumbe, Pemba Island, Tanzania, AD 600–950'. *Antiquity* 87: 1151–68.
- Fleisher, J. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2011. 'Ceramics and the early Swahili: deconstructing the Early Tana Tradition'. *African Archaeological Review* 28: 245–78.
- Fleisher, J., Lane, P., LaViolette, A., Horton, M. C., Pollard, E., Quintana Morales, E., *et al.* 2015. 'When did the Swahili become maritime?' *American Anthropologist* 117 (1): 100–15.
- Flexner, J. L., Fleisher, J. and LaViolette, A. 2008. 'Bead grinders and early Swahili household economy: analysis of an assemblage from Tumbe, Pemba Island, Tanzania, 7th–10th centuries AD'. *Journal of African Archaeology* 6 (2): 161–81.
- Frazier, J. 1980. 'Exploitation of marine turtles in the Indian Ocean'. *Human Ecology* 8 (4): 329–70.
- Frazier, J. 2003. 'Prehistoric and ancient historic interactions between humans and marine turtles'. In *The Biology of Sea Turtles, Volume 2*, edited by P. L. Lutz, J. A. Musick and J. Wyneken, 1–38. Boca Raton: CRC Press.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1962. *The East African Coast: Selected Documents from the First to the Earlier Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1981. *The Book of the Wonders of India by Captain Buzurg Ibn Shahriyar of Ramhormuz*. London: East West Publications.
- Fuller, D. Q. and Boivin, N. 2009. 'Crops, cattle and commensals across the Indian Ocean: current and potential archaeobiological evidence'. *Études Océan Indien* 42–43: 13–46.
- Fuller, D., Boivin, N., Hoogervorst, T. and Allaby, R. G. 2011. 'Across the Indian Ocean: the prehistoric movement of plants and animals'. *Antiquity* 84: 544–58.
- Grandidier, A. 1858. *Histoire Physique, Naturelle et Politique de Madagascar. Volume IV. Ethnographie de Madagascar. Tome Premier. Les Habitants de Madagascar. Deuxième Partie: Les Étrangers*. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale.
- Gunn, B. F., Baudouin, L. and Olsen, K. M. 2011. 'Independent origins of cultivated coconut (*Cocos nucifera* L.) in the Old World tropics'. *PLoS ONE* 6 (6): e21143.

- Håkansson, N. T. 2004. 'The human ecology of world systems in East Africa: the impact of the ivory trade'. *Human Ecology* 32 (5): 561–91.
- Helm, R., Crowther, A., Shipton, C., Tengeza, A., Fuller, D. Q. and Boivin, N. 2012. 'Exploring agriculture, interaction and trade on the eastern African littoral: preliminary results from Kenya'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 47 (1): 39–63.
- Helms, M. 1988. *Ulysses' Sail: An Ethnographic Odyssey of Power, Knowledge, and Geographical Distance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hornell, J. 1934. 'Indonesian influence on East African culture'. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 64: 305–32.
- Horton, M. C. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. C. and Blurton, T. R. 1988. "'Indian" metalwork in East Africa: the bronze lion statuette from Shanga'. *Antiquity* 62: 11–23.
- Horton, M. C. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Hunt, T. L. 2007. 'Rethinking Easter Island's ecological catastrophe'. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 34: 485–502.
- Hurles, M. E., Sykes, B. C., Joblin, M. A. and Forster, P. 2005. 'The dual origin of the Malagasy in Island Southeast Asia and East Africa: evidence from maternal and paternal lineages'. *American Journal of Human Genetics* 76: 894–901.
- Ingrams, W. H. 1924. 'Marine fish-traps in Zanzibar, Pemba, South India and Brazil'. *Man* 24: 132–3.
- Ingrams, W. H. 1931. *Zanzibar: Its History and Its People*. London: Witherby.
- Jones, E. P., Eager, H. M., Gabriel, S. I., Jóhannesdóttir, F. and Searle, J. B. 2013. 'Genetic tracking of mice and other bioproxies to infer human history'. *Trends in Genetics* 29: 298–308.
- Juma, A. 1996. 'The Swahili and the Mediterranean worlds: pottery of the late Roman period from Zanzibar'. *Antiquity* 70: 148–54.
- Juma, A. 2004. *Unguja Ukuu on Zanzibar: An Archaeological Study of Early Urbanism*. Uppsala: Uppsala University Department of Archaeology and Ancient History.
- Kourampas, N., Shipton, C., Mills, W., Tibesasa, R., Horton, H., Horton, M. C., *et al.* 2015. 'Late quaternary speleogenesis and landscape evolution in a tropical carbonate island: Pango La Kuumbi (Kuumbi Cave), Zanzibar'. *International Journal of Speleology* 44 (3): 293–314.
- Kusimba, C. 1999. *The Rise and Fall of Swahili States*. Walnut Creek: Alta Mira.
- Kusimba, C. 2004. 'Archaeology of slavery in East Africa'. *African Archaeological Review* 21 (2): 59–88.
- Kusimba, C. and Kusimba, S. 2005. 'Mosaics and interactions: East Africa, 2000 bp to the

present'. In *African Archaeology: A Critical Introduction*, edited by A. B. Stahl, 392–419. Oxford: Blackwell.

Kusimba, C., Killick, D. J. and Cresswell, R. G. 1994. 'Indigenous and imported metals at Swahili sites on the coast of Kenya'. In *Society, Culture and Technology in Africa*, edited by S. T. Childs, 63–77. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

Lane, P. 2010. 'Developing landscape historical ecologies in eastern Africa: an outline of current research and potential future directions'. *African Studies* 69 (2): 299–322.

Langley, M., Prendergast, M., Quintana Morales, E., Shipton, C., Crowther, A. and Boivin, N. 2016. 'Poison arrows and bone utensils in late Pleistocene eastern Africa: evidence from Kuumbi Cave, Zanzibar'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 51 (2): 155–77.

LaViolette, A. 2008. 'Swahili cosmopolitanism in Africa and the Indian Ocean world, AD 600–1500'. *Archaeologies* 4 (1): 24–49.

p.118

Leakey, M. D. 1966. 'Excavation of burial mounds in Ngorongoro Crater'. *Tanzania Notes and Records* 66: 123–35.

Lejju, B. J., Robertshaw, P. and Taylor, D. 2006. 'Africa's earliest bananas?' *Journal of Archaeological Science* 33: 102–13.

Lovejoy, P. 1983. *Transformations in Slavery*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Manguin, P. Y. 1993. 'Trading ships of the South China Sea: shipbuilding techniques and their role in the history and the development of Asian trade networks'. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 36 (3): 253–80.

Manning, P. 1990. *Slavery and African Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Martin, N. 2010. 'Les productions céramiques de l'Océan Indien Occidental: implications culturelles au carrefour d'influences'. PhD diss., INALCO.

Mbida, C. M., Van Neer, W., Doutrelepon, H. and Vrydaghs, L. 2000. 'Evidence for banana cultivation and animal husbandry during the first millennium bc in the forest of southern Cameroon'. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 27: 151–62.

Mbida, C. M., Doutrelepon, H., Vrydaghs, L., Swennen, R. L., Swennen, R. J., Beeckman, H., *et al.* 2001. 'First archaeological evidence of banana cultivation in Central Africa during the third millennium before present'. *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* 10: 1–6.

Mbida, C. M., De Langhe, E., Vrydaghs, L., Doutrelepon, H., Swennen, R. O., Van Neer, W. and de Maret, P. 2006. 'Phytolith evidence for the early presence of domesticated banana (*Musa*) in Africa'. In *Documenting Domestication: New Genetic and Archaeological Paradigms*, edited by M. A. Zeder and D. G. Bradley, 68–81. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Miller, J. I. 1969. *The Spice Trade of the Roman Empire*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Msaidie, S., Ducourneau, A., Boetsch, G., Longepied, G., Papa, K., Allibert, C., *et al.* 2010. 'Genetic diversity on the Comoros Islands shows early seafaring as major determinant of human biocultural evolution in the western Indian Ocean'. *European Journal of Human Genetics* 19: 89–94.
- Murray, G. W. and Warmington, E. H. 1967. 'Trogodytica: the Red Sea littoral in Ptolemaic times'. *The Geographical Journal* 133 (1): 24–33.
- Mutoro, H. W. 1998. 'Precolonial trading systems of the East African interior'. In *Transformations in Africa: Essays on Africa's Later Past*, edited by G. Connah, 186–203. London: Leicester University Press.
- Nelson, C. M. 1993. 'Evidence for early trade between the coast and interior of East Africa'. Paper presented at the World Archaeological Congress Mombasa Intercongress Conference, available online at: <http://www.chaz.org/Arch/Turkana/Jarigole/TRADE.HTM>, Mombasa.
- Neumann, K. and Hildebrand, E. 2009. 'Early bananas in Africa: the state of the art'. *Ethnobotany Research and Applications* 7: 353–62.
- Neumann, K., Bostoen, K., Höhn, A., Kahlheber, S., Ngomanda, A. and Tchiengué, A. 2012. 'First farmers in the Central African rainforest: a view from southern Cameroon'. *Quaternary International* 249: 53–62.
- Nurse, D. and Hinnebusch, T. J. 1993. *Swahili and Sabaki: A Linguistic History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ottoni, C., Van Neer, W., De Cupere, B., Daligault, J., Guimaraes, S., Peters, J., *et al.* 2017. 'The paleogenetics of cat dispersal in the ancient world'. *Nature Ecology and Evolution*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/s41559-017-0139>.
- Prendergast, M., Rouby, H., Punnwong, P., Marchant, R., Crowther, A., Kourampas, N., *et al.* 2016. 'Continental island formation and the archaeology of defaunation on Zanzibar, eastern Africa'. *PLoS ONE* 11 (2): e0149565.
- Quintana Morales, E. and Horton, M. C. 2014. 'Fishing and fish consumption in the Swahili communities of East Africa, 700–1400 CE'. *Internet Archaeology*, 37.
- Radimilahy, C. 1988. *L'Ancienne Métallurgie du Fer à Madagascar*. British Archaeological Reports International Series 422. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Radimilahy, C. 1993. 'Ancient iron-working in Madagascar'. In *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns*, edited by T. Shaw, P. Sinclair, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, 478–83. London: Routledge.
- Reade, J. (Ed.) 1996. *The Indian Ocean in Antiquity*. London: Kegan Paul.
- Reland, H. 1708. *Dissertationum Miscellanearum, Pars Tertia et Ultima*. Trajecti ad Rhenum: Guilielmus Broedelet.
- Schoff, W. H. 1912. *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea: Travel and Trade in the Indian Ocean by a Merchant of the First Century*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co.

- Seland, E. 2010. *Ports and Power in the Periplus: Complex Societies and Maritime Trade on the Indian Ocean in the First Century ad.* British Archaeological Reports International Series 2102. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Shajan, K., Tomber, R., Selvakumar, V. and Cherian, P. 2004. 'Locating the ancient port of Muziris: fresh findings from Pattanam'. *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 17: 312–20.
- Sheriff, A. 1981. 'The East African coast and its role in maritime trade'. In *UNESCO General History of Africa, Volume 2*, edited by G. Mokhtar, 551–67. London: Heinemann.
- Sheriff, A. 1987. *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar: Integration of an East African Commercial Empire into the World Economy, 1770–1873.* Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Sheriff, A. 2010. *Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean: Cosmopolitanism, Commerce and Islam.* London: Hurst & Company.
- Shipton, C., Crowther, A., Prendergast, M., Kourampas, N., Horton, M. C., Douka, K., et al. 2016. 'Reinvestigation of Kuumbi Cave, Zanzibar, reveals later Stone Age coastal habitation, early Holocene abandonment and Iron Age reoccupation'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 51 (2): 197–233.
- Sinclair, P. 2007. 'What is the archaeological evidence for external trading contacts on the East African coast in the first millennium bc?' In *Natural Resources and Cultural Connections of the Red Sea*, edited by J. Starkey, P. Starkey and T. Wilkinson, 1–8. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Sinclair, P., Juma, A. M. and Chami, F. 2006. 'Excavations at Kuumbi Cave on Zanzibar in 2005'. In *The African Archaeology Network: Research in Progress*, edited by J. Kinahan and J. Kinahan, 95–106. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press.
- Sinclair, P., Ekblom, A. and Wood, M. 2012. 'Trade and society on the south-east African coast in the later first millennium AD: the case of Chibuene'. *Antiquity* 86: 723–37.
- Sutton, J. E. G. 2002. 'Research and interpretation in eastern African archaeology'. *Journal of African History* 43: 503–5.
- Tanaka, K. 1997. 'Malayan cultivated rice and its expansion'. *Agricultural Archaeology* 1: 73–8.
- Taylor, K. W. 1976. 'Madagascar and the ancient Malayo-Polynesian myths'. In *Explorations in Early Southeast Asian History: The Origins of Southeast Asian Statecraft*, edited by K. R. Hall and J. K. Whitmore, 25–60. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies.
- Trimingham, J. S. 1975. 'The Arab geographers and the East African coast'. In *East Africa and the Orient: Cultural Synthesis in Pre-Colonial Times*, edited by H. N. Chittick and R. I. Rotberg, 115–46. New York: Africana Publishing Company.
- Van der Truuk, H. N. 1865. 'Outlines of a grammar of the Malagasy language'. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1: 419–46.

- Vansina, J. 2003. 'Bananas in Cameroun c. 500 bce? Not proven'. *Azania* 38: 174–6.
- Vérin, P. 1975. 'Austronesian contributions to the culture of Madagascar: some archaeological problems'. In *East Africa and the Orient: Cultural Syntheses in Pre-Colonial Times*, edited by H. N. Chittick and R. I. Rotberg, 164–91. New York: Africana Publishing Company.
- Vérin, P. 1986. *The History of Civilisation in North Madagascar*. Rotterdam: Balkema.
- Vérin, P. and Wright, H. T. 1999. 'Madagascar and Indonesia: new evidence from archaeology and linguistics'. *Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association Bulletin* 18: 35–42.
- Vernet, T. 2009. 'Slave trade and slavery on the Swahili coast, 1500–1750'. In *Slavery, Islam and Diaspora*, edited by B. A. Mirzai, I. M. Montana and P. Lovejoy, 37–76. Trenton: Africa World Press.
- Walsh, M. 2007. 'Island subsistence: hunting, trapping and the translocation of wildlife in the western Indian Ocean'. *Azania* 42: 83–113.
- Walshaw, S. 2015. *Swahili Trade, Urbanization, and Food Production: Botanical Perspectives from Pemba Island, Tanzania, 600–1500*. Cambridge Monographs in African Archaeology 90. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Walz, J. 2010. 'Route to a regional past: an archaeology of the lower Pangani (Ruvu) Basin, Tanzania, 500–1900 CE'. PhD diss., University of Florida.
- Wood, M. 2011. *Interconnections: Glass Beads and Trade in Southern and Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean – 7th to 16th Centuries ad*. Uppsala: African and Comparative Archaeology, Department of Archaeology and Ancient History Uppsala University.
- Wood, M., Panighello, S., Orsega, E. F., Robertshaw, P., van Elteren, J. T., Crowther, A., et al. 2016. 'Zanzibar and Indian Ocean trade in the first millennium CE: the glass bead evidence'. *Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences* 1–23, doi:10.1007/s12520-015-0310-z.
- Wright, D. K. 2005. 'New perspectives on early regional interaction networks of East African trade: a view from Tsavo National Park, Kenya'. *African Archaeological Review* 22 (3): 111–40.

p.120

- Wright, H. T. and Fanony, F. 1992. 'L'évolution des système d'occupation des sols dans la vallée de la rivière Mananara au nord-est de Madagascar'. *Taloha* 11: 16–64.
- Wright, H. T., Sinopoli, C., Wojnaroski, L., Hoffman, E. S., Scott, S. L., Redding, R. W. and Goodman, S. M. 1984. 'Early seafarers of the Comoro Islands: the Dembeni Phase of the IXth–Xth Centuries AD'. *Azania* 19: 13–59.
- Wright, H. T., Knudstad, J. E., Johnson, L. W. and Redding, R. W. 1992. 'Early Islam, oceanic trade and town development on Nzwani: the Comorian Archipelago in the XIth–XVth centuries AD'. *Azania* 27: 81–128.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2016. *A Material Culture: Consumption and Materiality on the Coast of Precolonial East Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Young, H. S., Raab, T. K., McCauley, D. J., Briggs, A. A. and Dirzo, R. 2010. 'The coconut palm, *Cocos nucifera*, impacts forest composition and soil characteristics at Palmyra Atoll, Central Pacific'. *Journal of Vegetation Science* 21: 1058–68.

8

THE SWAHILI LANGUAGE AND ITS EARLY HISTORY

Martin Walsh

From modest beginnings as the speech of a small group of mixed farmers, Swahili has become the lingua franca of millions of people in eastern Africa and beyond (Lewis *et al.* 2015). How did this extraordinary transformation begin? This chapter outlines what is known (and not known) about the origins and initial development of the Swahili language and its dialects, and what this tells us in turn about the history of its speakers. It is based largely on research in historical and comparative linguistics undertaken since the 1970s and continuing through to the present. The potential contribution of research of this kind to understandings of the African past is well established (Nurse 1997; Blench 2006), and the Swahili-speaking world has already been the subject of important studies (including Nurse and Spear 1985; Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993). Needless to say, this work is neither exhaustive nor unproblematic. As we shall see, many gaps in our knowledge remain, while current research suggests that major revisions might be made to existing reconstructions of Swahili linguistic and cultural history.

The origins of Swahili

Swahili (*Kiswahili*) is a Bantu language, and so a member of the wider Niger-Congo family, one of the four main African language phyla (Nurse and Philippson 2003: 1–7). Its name is derived from Arabic *sawāḥil* ‘coast’, hence *Waswahili* ‘people of the coast’ and *Kiswahili* ‘language (and culture) of the coast’. Swahili is the conventional English name, *Kiswahili* the autonym in Standard Swahili and the dialects on which it is based. Its use as an ethnic and linguistic label for the people and their language in the unrecorded past is a convenient and accepted anachronism.

While linguists have long been aware of its Bantu affiliation, the presence of a large

number of Arabic loanwords in Swahili has led many commentators over the years to claim that it is (or was) a pidgin, creole, or some other kind of mixed language. Like crude neo-racist theories about the Asian and Middle Eastern origins of Swahili ‘civilisation’, this is a view that has now been thoroughly repudiated (Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993: 36–7; Hinnebusch 1996). Swahili has the typological characteristics of a Bantu language (Nurse and Philippson 2003: 7–10), the most obvious perhaps being its system of noun classes (also found in some Niger-Congo languages outside of Bantu). Where it lacks such features – for example, tone – the processes that led to their loss can be readily identified.

p.122

The genetic classification of Swahili within Bantu has been progressively refined by linguists as more data have become available on the language and its closest relatives. Research undertaken from the 1970s onwards culminated in the publication of Derek Nurse and Tom Hinnebusch’s *Swahili and Sabaki: A Linguistic History* (1993), one of the most extensive studies of any Bantu subgroup. Nurse and Hinnebusch trace the origins of Swahili back to one particular group of East African Bantu languages, Northeast Coast (NEC) Bantu. In their classification NEC has four members; one of these, Sabaki, being the subgroup to which Swahili belongs. The full list of subgroups and their principal constituent languages is given by them as follows (1993: 4–19):

Sabaki:	Swahili, Mwani, Elwana (Ilwana), Pokomo, Mijikenda, Comorian
Seuta:	Bondei, Shambala (Shambaa, Sambaa), Ngulu (Nguu), Zigula (Zigua)
Ruvu:	Gogo, Kaguru, Kami, Kutu, Doe, Nhwele, Luguru, Sagara, Vidunda, Zaramo
Pare:	Pare (Asu), Tußeta (Taveta)

The non-Sabaki languages listed above are spoken primarily in the east of Tanzania, and it is generally presumed that Proto-Northeast Coast (PNEC) and its early dialects arose somewhere in this area, north of the Rufiji Basin. Although the precise origins of PNEC remain uncertain, the available evidence suggests a close affiliation with the Southern Highlands group of Bantu languages in southwest Tanzania. The implication of this is that PNEC and its early dialects arose at the time Bantu languages spread northwards and eastwards from the Nyasa-Tanganyika corridor towards the East African coast. A comparison of linguistic geography and ecology suggests a historical movement along the line of the Eastern Arc Mountains and onto the coastal plain to the east, a trajectory that demanded gradual adaptation to increasingly drier environments, especially when the ancestors of the Sabaki languages pushed northwards (Walsh 2003: 6).

Nurse and Hinnebusch did not make anything of these and other ecological connections. They did, however, speculate on the correlations between their linguistic

findings and the known archaeological record, assuming that the incoming Bantu speakers were responsible for the first Early Iron Age (EIA) sites on the coast and in its hinterland. As a result, they judged that ‘an approximate date around or slightly later than AD 1 would seem reasonable for PNEC’, with Proto-Sabaki (PSA) emerging ‘perhaps five hundred years later’ and Proto-Swahili ‘shortly after that’ (1993: 23, also 493). It should be emphasised that these were broad estimates based on the archaeological dates that were then available. They were not derived independently, but were considered to be plausible in terms of Nurse and Hinnebusch’s linguistic reconstruction.

In his ambitious synthesis of linguistic and archaeological evidence, *An African Classical Age*, Ehret (1998: 192) similarly surmised that speakers of NEC Bantu must have settled on the central Tanzanian coast in the early centuries AD. Unlike Nurse and Hinnebusch, however, Ehret argues that they were preceded by ‘Upland Bantu’, who moved to parts of (what is now) northeastern Tanzania and eastern Kenya from eastern Nyanza, to the east of Lake Victoria. These people, ancestors of the Chaga-Dabida and the Thagicu (Central Kenya Bantu, CKB), are supposed by Ehret to have been the producers of Kwale Ware pottery, while the NEC Bantu speakers who replaced them from the south were responsible for Tana Tradition ceramics (1998: 184–9, 2002: 175–6). However, the evidence for Ehret’s scenario is very weak: the distribution of Kwale and EIA/EIW (Early Iron Working) pottery is a much better fit with the NEC languages, and there is a much more parsimonious explanation for the presence of CKB loanwords on the coast (Helm 2000: 281–2; Spear 2000: 274; Walsh 2003: 6, 2013: 25–30).

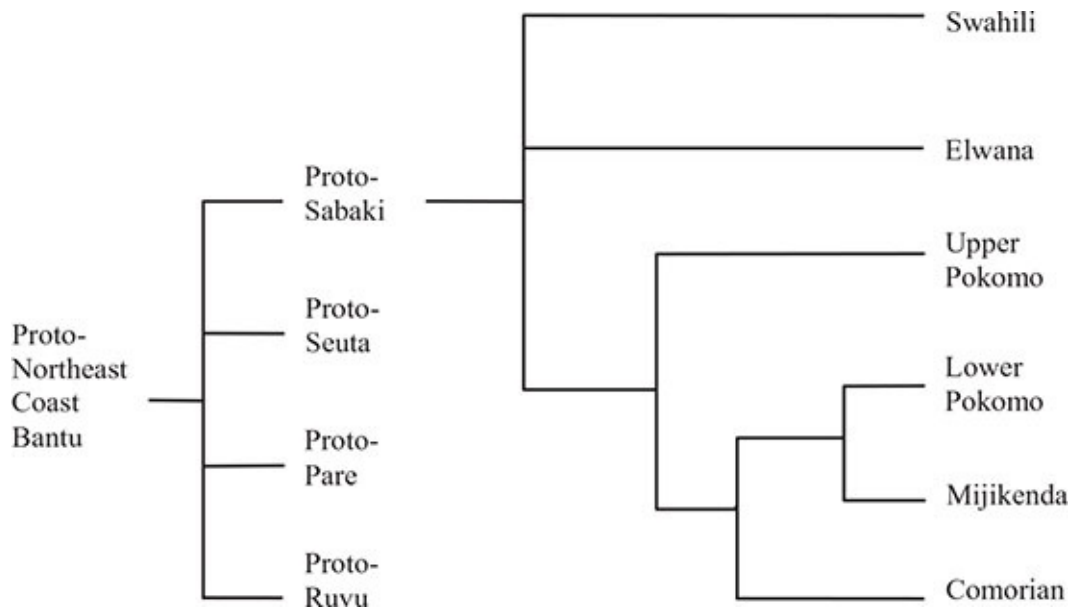
p.123

More recently, one of Ehret’s students (Gonzales 2009) has reprised his thesis, arguing that Upland Bantu (she calls them ‘Azania Bantu’) had spread down the Tanzanian coast around 200 bce, while PNEC speakers arrived in northeastern Tanzania much later, around 300 ce. On Gonzales’ account the PNEC period was short-lived, and by about 500–600 ce Proto-Sabaki and other NEC subgroups had begun to diverge. She identifies three initial subgroups, Proto-Sabaki, Proto-Asu (Nurse and Hinnebusch’s Proto-Pare), and Proto-Wami, the latter subsequently splitting into Proto-Seuta and Proto-Ruvu (compare with [Figure 8.1](#) below). Gonzales tries to maintain the correlation with pottery types proposed by Ehret, with NEC Bantu speakers as the makers of Tana Tradition ceramics. But, as we now know, the dates do not fit: early Tana Tradition ceramics are dated c. 600–900 CE, and are most closely associated with the coastal sites that became Swahili stonetowns, as well as some of their inland neighbours (Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2011: 246–8). This is clearly too late for PSA, and a much earlier date for its divergence from PNEC is suggested by Kwale/EIW dates from the third century CE, in the hinterland of the southern and central parts of the Kenya coast (Helm 2000: 69–71).

Let us return, though, to Nurse and Hinnebusch’s findings on the genetic classification of PNEC and especially PSA. Perhaps surprisingly, they did not summarise them in a tree

diagram. Their *Swahili and Sabaki* (1993) is a highly technical and densely argued work of historical linguistic reconstruction that gives careful consideration to different possible interpretations of the data and is correspondingly cautious in its conclusions. Because of this, relatively few non-specialists are conversant with the detail of their arguments or their principal conjectures, let alone in a position to assess them critically. Archaeologists and historians working on the East African coast are generally much more familiar with Nurse's earlier and more popular collaboration, which includes a much simpler tree diagram of the Sabaki languages (Nurse and Spear 1985: 54, Figure 7) than the ones that can be drawn from his joint work with Hinnebusch. My own version of the latter, based on a close reading of the 1993 text, is shown in [Figure 8.1](#) (for an alternative interpretation of Nurse and Hinnebusch's reconstruction of PSA, see Helm 2000: 45, Figure 2.6: this omits Upper Pokomo but retains Mwani as a primary branch of Sabaki).

Nurse and Hinnebusch's reconstruction of Sabaki history encompassed a number of significant findings. As can be seen from [Figure 8.1](#), the genetic classification of the Sabaki languages differs from their typological description. Viewed in terms of their historical development and relationships, Upper and Lower Pokomo are quite different languages, not the dialects of a single language that their names suggest. Nurse and Hinnebusch had some difficulty in classifying Upper Pokomo, which is spoken along the Tana River between Elwana and Lower Pokomo, and shares features of both. Lower Pokomo, though, has evidently shared much of its history with Mijikenda, and they both form a readily identified group together with Comorian. Moreover, whereas Comorian had traditionally been treated as a dialect or very close relative of Swahili, it was now clearly identified as a separate language with much more in common with Lower Pokomo and Mijikenda, though there was also evidence to suggest that the early Comorians had interacted with different Swahili-speaking communities (1993: 494–6).



[Figure 8.1](#) Genetic classification of the Sabaki languages. (Based on Nurse and

Although this might seem to bring us closer to solving the problem of Comorian origins, it still leaves a lot of questions unanswered, including the precise location of their last homeland and point of departure on the East African coast. Based on a pattern of shared phonological innovations, one linguist has suggested recently that a South Bantu substratum can be identified in Comorian, implying that it originated on the Mozambican coast as a language related to the group that now includes Makhuwa, Chuwabo, Sena, Ndau, Ronga, Gitonga and others, before shifting to become a Sabaki language (Wills 2013, 2015). This is an intriguing proposal whose details remains to be worked out and subjected to critical scrutiny. However, a similar language shift almost certainly gave rise to Mwani. This was demoted in Nurse and Hinnebusch's (1993: 527) classification from its position as the southernmost branch of Sabaki and reanalysed as the result of historical interaction between a variety of Southern Swahili and the Maviha dialect of the non-Sabaki language Makonde in northern Mozambique.

Swahili and Elwana remain as primary branches in Nurse and Hinnebusch's Sabaki tree, together with the Pokomo/Mijikenda/Comorian group. In their synthesis they argued that following the breakup of the PNEC community, 'the PSA moved north to a homeland somewhere in the area north of the Tana River, and probably into southern Somalia' (1993: 493). Nurse and Hinnebusch came to this conclusion after considering both linguistic geography (the principle of 'least moves') and the historical traditions of the Sabaki groups that claim a northern origin in a place called Shungwaya, usually located on the southern Somali coast. Traditions like this are notoriously unreliable as guides to the distant past, and the PSA community was more likely located somewhere to the south of where Nurse and Hinnebusch placed it (as argued in Walsh 1992, and Helm 2000). It is easier to accept their conclusion that the PSA period must have been relatively short, lasting less than three centuries (1993: 493) – though the date range that they proposed (500 CE or earlier to sometime before 800 CE) might be adjusted to line up with current archaeological dates, which suggest that a distinctive Swahili community had already emerged by the seventh century CE.

The development of dialects

Nurse and Hinnebusch assumed that the Proto-Swahili community, located in the same general area as their PSA predecessors, must also have been short-lived (1993: 297). The early dispersal of Swahili speakers from their northern homeland and establishment of settlements along more than a thousand miles of the eastern African coast and islands represents an extraordinary social and economic transformation that we are still only just

beginning to understand (Ray, this volume). It was matched by the development of many different dialects and local varieties of Swahili. The main dialects as they survive and are known today are listed in [Table 8.1](#), together with an indication of the principal sources of lexical information on each of them. I have included the Comorian dialects, as well as the ‘mixed languages’ in Mozambique whose classificatory status is equivocal (I will say more about this later).

p.125

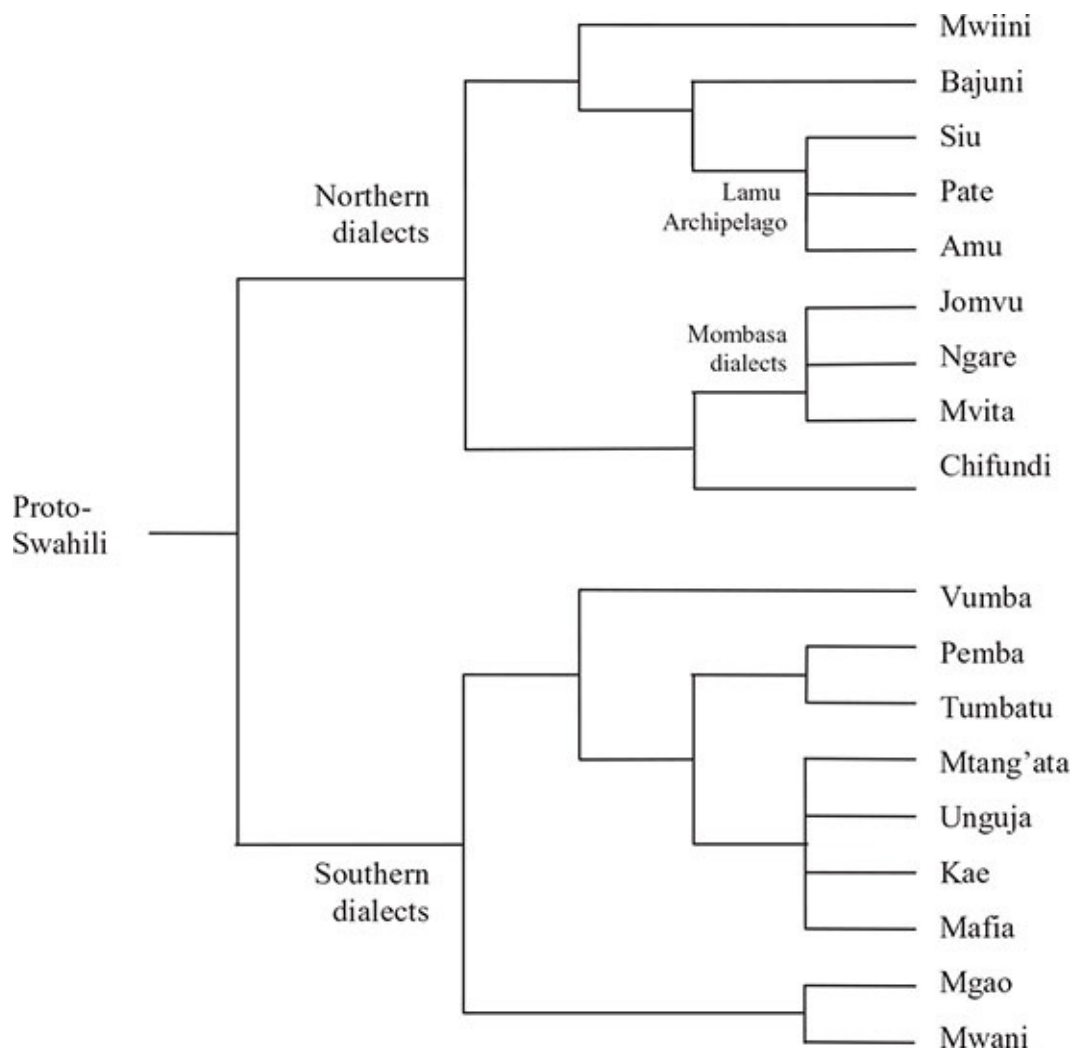
[Table 8.1](#) Main Swahili dialects as they are known today

<i>Dialect/dialect cluster</i>	<i>Principal lexical sources</i>
SWAHILI	
Mwiini (Mbalazi)	Kisseberth and Abasheikh 2004; Kisseberth 2016
Bajuni (Tikuu, Gunya)	Sacleux 1939; Nurse 2010
Siu, Pate, Amu	Sacleux 1939
Jomvu, Ngare	Lambert 1958a
Mvita	Krapf 1882; Binns 1925
Chifundi	Lambert 1958b
Vumba	Lambert 1957
Mrima	Sacleux 1939; Whiteley 1956
Pemba	Whiteley 1958; BAKIZA 2012a
Tumbatu	BAKIZA 2012b
Kae (Makunduchi, ‘Hadimu’)	Chum 1962, 1994; BAKIZA 2012c
Unguja	Sacleux 1939; Johnson 1939
Mafia	Kipacha 2004
Mgao	Kipacha 2010
Makwe (Maraba)	Devos 2008
Mwani	Rzewuski 1979; Floor 1998; Abudo <i>et al.</i> 2009
Koti	Schadeberg and Mucanheia 2000
COMORIAN	
Ngazija	Fischer 1949; Ahmed Chamanga and Gueunier 1979; Lafon 1991
Mwali	-
Nzwani	Ahmed-Chamanga 1992, 1997
Maore	Blanchy 1996

[Figure 8.2](#) summarizes Nurse and Hinnebusch’s (1993) genetic classification of Swahili dialects, together with some of the additional detail provided by Nurse’s earlier work (1982, 1984/85), including his collaboration with Spear (Nurse and Spear 1985). This work demonstrated a clear historical split between Northern and Southern Swahili dialects. The Northern dialects themselves split into two main subgroups, with Mwiini on the Somali coast being the most divergent member of the first of these, and Chifundi on the south Kenya coast of the second. The dialects of the Lamu Archipelago are close enough to one another to be described as local varieties, likewise the Mombasa dialects. The Southern dialects proved much harder to classify, and the resulting arrangement is rather more uncertain. In all of these cases linguistic analysis provides no more than relative timings, and for dates we have to rely on assumptions about the relation between known

settlement histories and dialect development.

Since the publication of Nurse and Hinnebusch's work a lot more information has become available on some of the Swahili dialects as well as other Sabaki languages. Understandings of language and dialect change have also evolved in tandem with developments in historical linguistics. This has not yet resulted in anything approaching a comprehensive revision of Nurse and Hinnebusch's *Swahili and Sabaki*, which remains the standard text on the emergence and development of the Swahili language. It is possible, however, to outline some of the more recent observations and findings that might form part of such a revision. Some of these have been made by Nurse and Hinnebusch themselves, writing in the wake of their 1993 study. Hinnebusch (1996: 76), for example, in a subsequent summary of their work, treated Mwiini as a distinct language rather than as a dialect of Swahili, implying that they might be considered to be coordinate members of the same branch of PSA (but see Nurse 1991, 2000: 234). Researchers working specifically on Mwiini have also raised doubts about its classification (for example, Kisseberth and Abasheikh 1977: 179, 2011: 1988), while sometimes continuing to describe it as a Swahili dialect (Henderson 2010: 75–6).



[Figure 8.2](#) Genetic classification of Swahili dialects (Based on Nurse 1982, 1984/85; Nurse and Spear 1985; Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993)

Nurse's subsequent research focused on the role of contact phenomena and their consequences for understanding language change, work that was inspired by methodological developments in historical linguistics (Thomason and Kaufman 1988). The potential significance of language shift in the creation of Swahili dialects was clearly demonstrated in studies of Chifundi and Vumba (Möhlig 1992; Nurse and Walsh 1992). Although these two dialects sit on either side of the Northern/Southern dialect divide, they share a number of features in common that cannot be ascribed simply to borrowing between them. It appears instead that they originate in Digo or an earlier form of Mijikenda, and that these distinctive Swahili dialects were formed when Mijikenda speakers shifted to speaking the language of their Swahili neighbours. Closer inspection indicates that there is evidence for contact phenomena and similar processes taking place throughout Sabaki and sometimes involving contact with non-Sabaki languages. Nurse (2000) has reanalysed Elwana (Ilwana) from the perspective of its interactions with the Cushitic language Orma, and Wills' (2013, 2015) suggestion that there might be a South Bantu substratum in Comorian would also fall under this heading.

Further evidence for the role of contact in the development of Swahili dialects comes from the southern end of the Swahili spectrum. Since the publication of Nurse and Hinnebusch's study in 1993, much more research has been undertaken and data published on Mwani and other 'mixed languages' on the coast and islands of northern Mozambique. The best known of these studies is Schadeberg and Mucanheia's monograph on Ikoti (2000), which is spoken on the island of the same name and some villages on the adjacent mainland (Schadeberg and Mucanheia 2000). More often than not, Ikoti has been described as a dialect of Swahili, and a lot of its vocabulary suggests as much. Structurally, however, it is clearly derived from Makhuwa, and can be analysed as being the product of a partial language shift from this South Bantu language to Swahili. Schadeberg and Mucanheia hypothesise that this process began relatively recently, in the fifteenth century, when speakers of Swahili – possibly the Mgao dialect – are said to have established the town of Angoche (2000: 7–8).

p.127

As noted earlier in this chapter, Mwani can be analysed similarly (Petzell 2002: 88–9), as can other coastal idioms like Makwe (Maraba) that appear to have Makonde origins. It is quite likely that more examples of such admixture are waiting to be identified and described among the languages and dialects of the East African coast and islands, adding further complexity to the language trees that have been presented here. Such cases of past interaction are hardest to analyse when they involve closely related dialects of the same language: this applies in particular to Swahili, given what we already know and traditions tell us about the movements of groups of speakers from one community to another. This is made more difficult by the lack of reliable linguistic data on many dialects. While new information continues to emerge, the possibility of collecting more is diminished by the accelerating decline of local varieties in response to the deleterious impacts of globalisation, including the spread of Standard Swahili and other dominant dialects. The focus of much linguistic research on Swahili literature and urban speech habits does little to help in this context either.

Towards a new synthesis?

There remains a lot about the history of Swahili before the modern era that we do not know. In addition to pursuing the revision of Nurse and Hinnebusch's model along the lines that have been sketched above, there are a number of other strategies of historical linguistic research that have barely been followed to date. The most obvious perhaps of these is the in-depth study and analysis of particular lexical and cultural domains (cf. Walsh 2003: 63–5, 2007: Appendix), particularly those relevant to understanding the history of distinctive social and economic practices among the speakers of Swahili and neighbouring languages. This relies in turn on the availability of good lexical data.

Although a great deal can be done with existing dictionaries and wordlists, there are many gaps in our lexical knowledge of Sabaki and Swahili that remain to be filled and act as a constraint on this kind of research. Even when we possess good vocabularies, like the published lists of Swahili nautical terminology (Prins 1970; Mieke and Schadeberg 1979: 80–93), we often lack comparative material from elsewhere (in this case from the Comoros and other maritime communities in the region). In the case of this particular lexical field, it would also be good to know more about the Arabic and other sources of much of the vocabulary.

While a fair amount is known already about the influence of Arabic on Swahili in recent centuries, relatively little is known about earlier patterns of word borrowing from the East African coast and its hinterland as well as from different places across the Indian Ocean. Nurse and Hinnebusch have outlined the main sources of lexical innovation in Swahili and its dialects, but some sets of loanwords deserve much more thorough investigation. These include words of Cushitic origin that appear to derive from contact between the early Swahili and their neighbours on the coast, among them hunting, foraging and fishing communities (Nurse 1988). Further research is also required to understand the history of interactions between Swahili and other languages spoken in and around the Indian Ocean. The nature and extent of early contacts with the speakers of Austronesian languages, including the Proto-Malagasy and their descendants, is only one of a number of unsolved problems in this context for both Swahili and Comorian history (Adelaar 2009).

p.128

We are some way off from fully understanding how and why Swahili society and culture emerged and developed from the relatively simple beginnings that they had. How did this group of mixed farmers adapt to life on the coast, and the new opportunities for subsistence and exchange that it must have offered? What prompted the migration of both the Swahili and the Comorians from their homelands, and what was the connection between these movements and other developments in the western Indian Ocean, including the trade in slaves and other African goods? What role, if any, did the settlers of Madagascar play in this history? These and other unanswered questions invite a multidisciplinary approach that includes historical and comparative linguistics. Research along the lines suggested in this chapter has the potential to deliver not only a better understanding of the history of Swahili, but also to make an important contribution to the synthesis that will surely emerge.

References

Abudo, F., Buana, C., Bacar, S., Aquimo, M. and de Sousa, A. F. 2009. *Vocabulário de Kimwani*. Nampula: SIL Mozambique.

- Adelaar, A. 2009. 'Towards an integrated theory about the Indonesian migrations to Madagascar'. In *Ancient Human Migrations: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, edited by P. N. Peregrine, I. Peiros and M. Feldman, 149–72. Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press.
- Ahmed-Chamanga, M. 1992. *Lexique comorien-(shindzuwani)-français*. Paris: Editions l'Harmattan.
- Ahmed-Chamanga, M. 1997. *Dictionnaire français-comorien (dialecte shindzuwani)*. Paris: CEROI-INALCO/L'Harmattan.
- Ahmed-Chamanga, M. and Gueunier, N.-J. 1979. *Le dictionnaire comorien-français et français-comorien du R. P. Sacleux* (2 Vols.). Paris: SELAF.
- Baraza la Kiswahili la Zanzibar (BAKIZA) 2012a. *Kamusi la Lahaja ya Kipemba*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- Baraza la Kiswahili la Zanzibar (BAKIZA) 2012b. *Kamusi la Lahaja ya Kitumbatu*. Zanzibar: Jamana Printers Ltd.
- Baraza la Kiswahili la Zanzibar (BAKIZA) 2012c. *Kamusi la Lahaja ya Kimakunduchi*. Zanzibar: Jamana Printers Ltd.
- Binns, H. K. 1925. *Swahili-English Dictionary: Being Dr. Krapf's Original Swahili-English Dictionary Revised and Re-arranged*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.
- Blanchy, S. 1996. *Dictionnaire mahorais-français, français-mahorais*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Blench, R. M. 2006. *Archaeology, Language, and the African Past*. Lanham: Altamira Press.
- Chum, H. 1962. 'A vocabulary of the Kikae (Kimakunduchi, Kihadimu) dialect: with examples illustrating the morphology'. *Swahili: Journal of the East African Swahili Committee* 33 (1): 51–68.
- Chum, H. 1994. *Msamiati wa Pekee wa Kikae: Kae Specific Vocabulary*. Uppsala: Nordic Association of African Studies.
- Devos, M. 2008. *A Grammar of Makwe (Palma, Mozambique)*. München: LINCOM Europa.
- Ehret, C. 1998. *An African Classical Age: Eastern and Southern Africa in World History, 1000 bc to ad 400*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.
- Ehret, C. 2002. *The Civilizations of Africa: A History to 1800*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Fischer, F. 1949. *Grammaire-dictionnaire comorien*. Strasbourg: Société d'Édition de la Basse-Alsace.
- Fleisher, J. B. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2011. 'Ceramics and the early Swahili: deconstructing the Early Tana Tradition'. *African Archaeological Review* 28 (4): 245–78.
- Floor, S. 1998. *Vocabulário mwani-português*. Pemba: SIL Mozambique.
- Gonzales, R. M. 2009. *Societies, Religion, and History: Central-East Tanzanians and the World They Created, c. 200 bce to 1800 ce*. New York: Columbia University Press. Available online at: <http://www.gutenberg-e.org/gonzales/>.
- Helm, R. 2000. 'Conflicting histories: the archaeology of the iron-working, farming

communities in the central and southern coast region of Kenya'. PhD diss., University of Bristol.

Henderson, B. 2010. 'Chimwiini: endangered status and syntactic distinctiveness'. *Journal of West African Languages* 37 (1): 75–91.

Hinnebusch, T. J. 1996. 'What kind of language is Swahili?' *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere* 47: 73–95.

p.129

Johnson, F. (Ed.) 1939. *A Standard Swahili-English Dictionary*. London: Oxford University Press.

Kipacha, A. 2004. 'Kingome-English lexicon'. *Swahili Forum*, 11: 179–209.

Kipacha, A. 2010. 'The quest for Kingao coastal Swahili: latest findings'. In *Bantu Languages: Analyses, Description and Theory*, edited by K. Legère and C. Thornell, 85–98. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe.

Kisseberth, C. W. 2016. 'Chimiini-English dictionary and chrestomathy'. Available online at: <http://swahiliendangered.cdh.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Chimiini-Lexicon-and-Chrestomathy-February-2016.pdf>.

Kisseberth, C. W. and Abasheikh, M. I. 1977. 'The object relationship in Chi-Mwiini, a Bantu language'. In *Syntax and Semantics, Volume 8: Grammatical Relations*, edited by P. Cole and J. N. Sadock, 179–218. New York: Academic Press.

Kisseberth, C. W. and Abasheikh, M. I. 2004. *The Chimwiini Lexicon Exemplified*. Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa (ILCAA), Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.

Kisseberth, C. W. and Abasheikh, M. I. 2011. 'Chimwiini phonological phrasing revisited'. *Lingua* 121: 1987–2013.

Krapf, L. 1882. *A Dictionary of the Suahili Language*. London: Trubner & Co.

Lafon, M. 1991. *Lexique français-comorien (shingazidja)*. Paris: Editions L'Harmattan.

Lambert, H. E. 1957. *Ki Vumba: A Dialect of the Southern Kenya Coast*. Kampala: East African Swahili Committee.

Lambert, H. E. 1958a. *Chi-Jomvu and Ki-Ngare: Subdialects of the Mombasa Area*. Kampala: East African Swahili Committee.

Lambert, H. E. 1958b. *Chi-Chifundi: A Dialect of the Southern Kenya Coast*. Kampala: East African Swahili Committee.

Lewis, M. P., Simons, G. F. and Fennig, C. D. (Eds) 2015. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* (18th Edition). Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Available online at: <http://www.ethnologue.com>.

Miehe, G. and Schadeberg, T. C. (Eds) 1979. *Sambo ya Kiwandeo: The Ship of Lamu-Island by Ahmed Sheikh Nabhany*. Leiden: Afrika-Studiecentrum.

- Möhlig, W. J. G. 1992. 'Language death and the origin of strata: two case studies of Swahili dialects'. In *Language Death: Factual and Theoretical Explanations with Special Reference to East Africa*, edited by M. Brenzinger, 157–79. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Nurse, D. 1982. 'A tentative classification of the primary dialects of Swahili'. *Sprache und Geschichte in Afrika* 4: 165–205.
- Nurse, D. 1984/85. 'A historical view of the southern dialects of Swahili'. *Sprache und Geschichte in Afrika* 6: 225–50.
- Nurse, D. 1988. 'Alternative historical sources for Swahili vocabulary'. In *Languages and Cultures: Studies in Honor of Edgar C. Polomé*, edited by M. A. Jazayery and W. Winter, 475–87. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Nurse, D. 1991. 'Language contact, creolization, and genetic linguistics: the case of Mwiini'. In *Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society: Special Session on African Language Structures*, 177–87. Berkeley: University of California.
- Nurse, D. 1997. 'The contribution of linguistics to the study of history in Africa'. *Journal of African History* 38 (3): 359–91.
- Nurse, D. 2000. *Inheritance, Contact, and Change in Two East African Languages*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe.
- Nurse, D. 2010. 'Lexicon for Ki-Bajuni = Ki-Gunya = Ki-Ṭ^hik^huu'. Available online at: http://www.ucsf.edu/~dnurse/bajuni_database/wordlist.pdf.
- Nurse, D. and Hinnebusch, T. J. 1993. *Swahili and Sabaki: A Linguistic History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Nurse, D. and Philippson, G. 2003. 'Introduction'. In *The Bantu Languages*, edited by D. Nurse and G. Philippson, 1–12. London and New York: Routledge.
- Nurse, D. and Spear, T. 1985. *The Swahili: Reconstructing the History and Language of an African Society, 800–1500*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Nurse, D. and Walsh, M. T. 1992. 'Chifundi and Vumba: partial shift, no death'. In *Language Death: Factual and Theoretical Explanations with Special Reference to East Africa*, edited by M. Brenzinger, 181–121. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Petzell, M. 2002. 'A sketch of Kimwani (a minority language of Mozambique)'. *Africa & Asia: Göteborg Working Papers on Asian and African Languages and Literatures* 2: 88–110.
- Prins, A. H. J. 1970. *A Swahili Nautical Dictionary*. Dar es Salaam: Chuo cha Uchunguzi wa Lugha ya Kiswahili.

- Rzewuski, E. 1979. *Vocabulário da língua mwani (quimwane)*. Maputo: Eduardo Mondlane University (Departamento de Letras Modernas).
- Sacleux, C. 1939. *Dictionnaire Swahili-Français*. Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie.

- Schadeberg, T. C. and Mucanheia, F. U. 2000. *Ekoti: The Maka or Swahili Language of Angoche*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe.
- Spear, T. 2000. 'Early Swahili history reconsidered'. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 33 (2): 257–90.
- Thomason, S. G. and Kaufman, T. 1988. *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Walsh, M. T. 1992. 'Mijikenda origins: a review of the evidence'. *TransAfrican Journal of History* 21: 1–18.
- Walsh, M. T. 2003. 'Languages, cultures and environments: historical linguistics between the African Great Lakes and the western Indian Ocean'. In *Second Platina Workshop 17–19 October 2002, Usa River, Arusha, Tanzania*, edited by A. Dahlberg, H. Öberg, S. Trygger, K. Holmgren and P. Lane, 53–74. Stockholm: Environment and Development Studies Unit, Stockholm University.
- Walsh, M. T. 2007. 'Island subsistence: hunting, trapping and the translocation of wildlife in the western Indian Ocean'. *Azania* 42: 83–113.
- Walsh, M. T. 2013. 'The Segeju Complex? Linguistic evidence for the precolonial making of the Mijikenda'. In *Contesting Identities: The Mijikenda and Their Neighbors in Kenyan Coastal Society*, edited by R. Gearhart and L. Giles, 25–51. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press.
- Whiteley, W. H. 1956. *Ki-Mtang'ata: A Dialect of the Mrima Coast*. Kampala: East African Swahili Committee.
- Whiteley, W. H. 1958. *The Dialects and Verse of Pemba: An Introduction*. Kampala: East African Swahili Committee.
- Wills, J. 2013. "'Strong Y-" as an isogloss for Southern Bantu'. Paper presented to the 5th International Conference on Bantu Languages (Bantu 5), Paris, 12–15 June.
- Wills, J. 2015. 'The South Bantu stage of Comorian'. Unpublished MS.

PART II

The Swahili age

Origins and early emporia

9

SWAHILI ORIGINS

Mark Horton and Felix Chami

Introduction

Swahili origins are a vexed issue, wrapped up at a fundamental level with questions of identity. Swahili towns and villages themselves have origins, which take us back in places to the earliest permanent occupation of the eastern African coastal zone. Yet questions of origins imply also a consideration of *who* founded the coastal settlements, *when* and *how*; also implicated are questions of when Swahili settlements developed the characteristics of urbanism, trade and Islam that we today hold as definitive (Horton and Middleton 2000). In this chapter we explore these issues in turn, bringing together the sometimes contradictory perspectives of the two authors. Rather than flattening the differences in approach, we have sought to preserve the controversies, believing that this makes for a richer appreciation of the complexity of the coastal past. Nonetheless, there is a great deal of agreement here. We chart the earliest evidence for trade relationships between the eastern African coast, much of which predates the earliest coastal settlement and might provide clues to the first occupants. We then move on to consider the identity of the earliest settlers, drawing on ceramic evidence and continuities with earlier populations. We outline a developmental trajectory that sees the earliest trading settlements in central Tanzania and the Zanzibar Archipelago, previewing similar settlements on the northern and southern coast. Finally, we consider when these coastal settlements adopted Islam, and when they became ‘towns’.

The origins debate and ‘Afro-Arab’ culture

The Swahili coast was one of a number of parts of Africa whose history was misrepresented during the period of European colonialism. The sophisticated towns of the littoral were interpreted as the legacy of Arab settlement in the region. In this case, the

myth of external origins was supported by the claims of local Omani and indigenous elites. The name ‘Swahili’ was applied to people of African descent, generally freed slaves who had become Muslims (Horton and Middleton 2000: 16). The inheritors of Swahili culture, rather, were designated ‘Shirazi’, a term reflecting local myths of foreign origins, recorded in oral tradition or chronicles, of which the version in the *History of Kilwa* is the best known (Freeman-Grenville 1962a, 1962b: 34–49; Coppola, this volume).

p.136

The Shirazi were the claimed descendants of seven brothers, or a king and his six sons, who set out from the city of Shiraz (in modern Iran) and founded seven towns – the exact list varies between versions – that went on to become significant Swahili towns (Chittick 1965). To colonial-era historians, the Shirazi myth enabled a narrative of a creolised society to be told, where Arab merchants from the Middle East (technically they should have been Persians) married local African women and spawned an ‘Afro-Arab’ culture, a debased version of pure Islamic civilisation on eastern African shores (Pearce 1920: 351; Coupland 1938: 9). Their language, Swahili, was thought to be half Arabic; their architecture a misunderstood interpretation of great buildings of the Middle East; their Islam soiled by African syncretic influences of spirits and ancestors. Behind such views lay a fundamental racism that reflected the colonial milieu. It took until the early 1980s for indigenous origins to be postulated for Swahili towns. Even nowadays, this view is not wholly accepted in either the academic or popular literature (Pradines 2014; Asante 2015: 159).

The reinterpretation of Swahili origins converged from several directions in the 1980s. Historians were beginning to apply methodologies of oral history to coastal traditions, and understand these stories as ‘foundation charters’, created later to solidify social identity and explain contemporary realities (Spear 1981; Ray, this volume). Some were clearly only nineteenth-century in origin, generated as a response to rapid social changes of the time, others a possible re-working of African origin myths. The Shirazi stories were given particular attention, and largely dismissed as literally and chronologically implausible (Allen 1982; Spear 1984). Meanwhile, linguists classified Swahili as a Northeast Coastal Bantu language, akin to neighbouring languages such as Mijikenda and Pokomo, with which it formed the Sabaki sub-group (Nurse and Spear 1985; Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993; Walsh, this volume). The study of different languages within the Swahili family showed that Standard Swahili, based on kiUnguja, the language of Zanzibar, was somewhat exceptional in the number of Arabic loan words – largely through its nineteenth-century history – and that other languages such as kiAmu (Lamu) and kiMvita (Mombasa) had far fewer. The earliest form of Swahili, preserved in the poetry of Kigozi, had virtually none.

The archaeological contribution to the debate was also significant. Excavations had been conducted since the late 1940s by James Kirkman; he worked principally at the site of Gede near Malindi, which he believed to be an Arab colonial settlement (Kirkman 1954).

He worked at a number of other Swahili sites, including Ras Mkumbuu on Pemba (Kirkman 1959) and Jumba la Mtwara north of Mombasa, before turning his attention to the massive Portuguese fortress of Fort Jesus, but never fully repudiated his earlier views. To him, 'Swahili' was 'mainly an alien convenience in referring to the peoples of the coast of mixed Afro-Arab stock, Muslim in religion and way of life and speaking an Arabised form of north-east Coastal Bantu' (Kirkman 1961: 313). The other significant archaeologist working on the coast between 1959 and his death in 1984 was H. Neville Chittick, whose key excavations at Kilwa and Manda were used in his many synthetic writings, to bolster claims of Arab origins and a 'miscegenated' African society whose 'springs' lay in the Middle East (Chittick 1974, 1977: 218). His final published claims were that Manda was a colony of Persian merchants who had emigrated from the international port of Siraf (modern Iran) in the ninth century, a settlement echoed and confirmed in the Shirazi traditions (Chittick 1984: 219).

In 1980, one of us (Horton 1984, 1996a, this volume) began an excavation at the little-known urban site of Shanga, on Pate, the island adjacent to Manda, where Chittick had been working two years earlier (Map 2, p. xxiii). At the time it was thought to be an unexceptional fourteenth-century town, but proved to have deep stratigraphy, the earliest levels of which were contemporary with the earliest levels at Manda (Kusimba *et al.*, this volume), with identical imported and local ceramics. As descendants of the abandoned Shanga still live in the nearby Swahili town of Siyu, a thread connected the present back into the ninth century (as it later turned out, to *c.* 750). The basal levels of Shanga could help resolve the origins debate. Unlike at Manda, the oldest levels at Shanga were circular timber buildings occupied by craftsmen making shell beads and working iron; their diet was fish and shellfish, and their ceramics were 98 per cent locally made. Shanga was clearly an African settlement from its beginning, and hence we were able to show that the similar archaeology of neighbouring Manda had been misinterpreted (Horton 1986). As the historians and linguists were then arguing, we now had firm archaeological evidence that the Swahili were indeed an indigenous African culture.

p.137

The challenge in the early 1980s was to identify how and when the Swahili began and how their complex society was able to develop within the context of the western Indian Ocean globalising networks, based on monsoon wind-driven maritime commerce. By jettisoning the over-simplistic Arab colonial model, we were faced with some difficult questions, some of which remain unresolved. These included an understanding of who first settled the coast and when; how did the coastal settlements become Islamic; were the Swahili settlements in any sense truly urban and, if so, when did they become urban; and how should we both reassess the external sources (Classical, Arabic, Persian, Indian Chinese, European) and integrate Swahili oral histories and chronicles?

During the late 1980s, two complementary projects focussed on these questions. The

Leverhulme Trust supported an investigation by the British Institute in Eastern Africa into the origins of Islam that enabled one of us (Horton 1996a) to complete the excavations at Shanga and undertake new work on Zanzibar and Pemba. In Sweden, SAREC supported a much larger project into Urban Origins in East Africa, that centred around PhD projects undertaken by African scholars (for example, Chami 1994; Juma 2004), now published as monographs. The complementary approaches of these two projects, represented by the two present authors, moved the debate forward, often through constructive controversy and some quite fierce disagreements.

Prehistoric origins?

Central to this new thinking was the idea that eastern African coastal settlements were much older than the ninth-century date offered by the Arab colonial model. The Indian Ocean was an ideal region across which long-distance trade networks could develop, following the annual cycle of monsoon winds and currents. Once the maritime technology had developed and navigational skills been learnt, it was relatively straightforward to sail large distances, and it seemed unlikely that the coast would have been excluded from these globalisations (Chami forthcoming). The earliest trade relationships may have been with dynastic Egypt via the Red Sea: the land of Punt known from Egyptian texts seems likely to have been on Africa's Red Sea or Indian Ocean coasts, maybe even as far south as Zanzibar (Kitchen 2004; Bolliger *et al.* 2005: 297). Here, Egyptian traders encountered wild animals such as hippopotami, leopards and giraffes; their trade goods probably included ivory, animal skins, live animals and musicians, and perhaps also resins such as gum copal and spices such as cinnamon.

Pre-Swahili coastal settlement

The *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (*PME*), *c.* 40–50 CE, adds significant information as to how the eastern African coast fits into wider Indian Ocean networks. While Roman ships sailed regularly from the Red Sea to the 'far-side ports' that extended along the northern Somali coast, possibly down as far as Ras Hafun, it seems that voyaging further south was largely reserved for Arabian skippers and agents from Muza, an Arabian town close to Okelis at the extreme southern end of the Red Sea (Casson 1989: 61). The *Periplus* provides a detailed itinerary that can be followed credibly down the African coast, with the sailors stopping every evening in a harbour – two named as Nikon and Serapion – taking *c.* 25 days for the journey. The end of the voyage was marked by Menouthias island, 'about 300 stadia from the mainland' (around 48 kms), and two days' sailing (*c.* 140 km) on to Rhapta, 'the very last port of trade on the coast of Azania' (Casson 1989: 61, *PME* 16). Arabian sailors traded axes, knives, small awls, numerous types of glass stones, as well as

wine and grain 'as an expenditure of the good will of the Barbaroi'. In exchange they could obtain ivory, rhinoceros horn, tortoise shell and possibly nautilus shell (Casson 1989: 61, *PME* 17).

p.138

Only after Rhapta and Menouthias have been satisfactorily located and excavated will it be possible to establish whether this marks the beginning of coastal/pre-Swahili culture. The only *PME* port to have been convincingly located in Africa is Opone (Ras Hafun), but even here only temporary encampments were found on the basis of the ceramics found, from the third/second century bce to fifth century CE (Smith and Wright 1988). Possible locations of several of the ports have not been explored, as they lie along the presently inaccessible Somali coast. Menouthias is considered to be Pemba, Zanzibar, or Mafia and locations for Rhapta are variously considered to be near Tanga, the Pangani river, Dar es Salaam, or the Rufiji (Baxter 1944; Kirwan 1986; Chami 2006a: 174). Another classical source, the *Geography* of Claudius Ptolemy (c. 150 CE, Stevenson 1991: 107–9; Berggren and Jones 2000: 79–81), that was apparently independent of the *PME*, broadly confirms its geography as noted above, but locates Menouthias far to the south as either the Comoros or northern Madagascar (Lacroix 1998: 101; Horton and Middleton 2000: 33–7; Chami 2006a: 174–5). Rhapta is located 'a short distance from the sea' along the river Rhapta (the coordinates given are actually 1½ or c. 145 km) somewhere on the Tanzanian coast. The only rivers navigable for even a short distance inland are the Pangani, Wami and Rufiji: for a distance of 145 km, only the Rufiji. Ptolemy also claimed that the people living in the area of the Rhapta River were called Rafiji Ethiopes – possibly the modern waRufiji (*Geog.* 4.8), while also mentioning four islands off the eastern African coast (*Geog.* 4.7): Amici (?Pemba), the two Men-arf islands (?Tumbatu and Zanzibar, possibly a corruption of Menouthias), and a southerly island called Myrfiaca (clearly Mafia) (Stevenson 1991: 109; Chami 2006a: 175).

Despite extensive archaeological survey by one of us (FC) in the Rufiji area of Tanzania, archaeological evidence for this Classical-era trade entrepôt remains elusive. Finds of Roman coins in non-archaeological contexts, for example, can be explained as later or casual losses, mostly from the colonial period (Horton 1996b). Several sites of the Early Iron Age (EIA), dating to the first and second centuries CE – the time of Ptolemy and the *PME* – have been found in the Rufiji area (Chami 2001, 2006a). A small collection of material from one of these (Kivinja) may be used as evidence of such ancient trade. The materials found include possible Greco-Roman glass fragments and early alkaline glazed ware (Chami and Msemwa 1997). Nearby glass beads, possibly from the Isle of Rhodes in the Mediterranean, have been found (Chami 1999a; cf. Wood, this volume). It is possible that Rhapta itself remains elusive because it was not a true 'metropolis', but rather a shifting port of trade, a seasonal marketplace for communities from Africa and overseas, leaving only scant trace in the archaeological record.

The identity of the communities engaging in that early trade remains a contested topic. The *PME* provides a description of the inhabitants of Rhapta, but the meaning has remained obscure and concerns the Greek work *oratoi*. In one translation it is as ‘very big bodied men, tillers of the soil’ (Casson 1989: 61), and in another they have piratical habits (Huntingford 1980), neither of which seems satisfactory from an archaeological perspective. Underlying these discussions is whether the *PME* coastal communities were newly arrived Early Iron Age agriculturalists, or longer resident, pastoral or agropastoral societies (Horton 1990). One possibility (Chami 2006a) is that the EIA communities were of people derived from the Neolithic tradition, which could have been agropastoral, as several sites of this tradition, although undated, have been reported for the littoral, islands, and as far south as the Mozambican border (Chami and Kwekason 2003).

p.139

Recent excavations at Maramba, near Tanga (Map 1, p. xxii) on the northern Tanzanian coast, provide support for the idea of long-term continuities in coastal settlement associated with different lifeways. Maramba is close to where some Roman coins were found (Chittick 1966), and Tanga Bay is one of the best natural harbours in eastern Africa: and at 4 degrees south, close to where Ptolemy located the emporium of Toniki. In a cultural layer dated to the first century CE, cattle bones were found in association with EIA Limbo phase pottery, as well as thin-walled sherds that resemble Bambata pottery. The latter is thought to be Late Stone Age or Neolithic pottery from southern Africa. These were with a few sherds of imported pottery that may have originated in the Red Sea area (Ntandu 2015).

The inhabitants of Menouthias are described as having fish traps, sewn boats and dugout canoes; they fished and collected turtles and followed a largely maritime way of life (*PME*, Ch. 15). The consumption of aquatic resources on this scale would emphatically rule out pastoral groups. An important breakthrough in understanding such island communities came from a survey of Mafia Archipelago (Chami 1999b; Chami 2004), where at least four EIA sites were located. Excavation at the Juani Primary School site has demonstrated close similarities with such descriptions of Menouthias in the faunal record (Boivin and Crowther, Christie, this volume). This is a significant EIA site, with classic Kwale-type ceramics, initially radiocarbon-dated to the third century CE (Chami 1999b), but re-dated to the fifth or early sixth century (Crowther *et al.* 2016). It exhibits much exploitation of fish including offshore species (demonstrating boat use), green turtle and shellfish in quantity. There was no evidence for farming but of some hunting of small mammals and reptiles. Working of shell beads, presumably for trade or exchange networks, used local sources of marine shell. While 200–400 years later than the *PME*, the Juani Primary School site provides the most convincing example of the kind of community that was probably involved in early oceanic trade. Mlongo, another EIA site on Mafia discovered by FC, has been recently re-excavated (Kwekason and Walz 2015) and dated to *c.* 250–500 CE. It contained a single Indo-Pacific glass bead and carbonised palm fronds (possibly Southeast

Asian coconut (*Cocos nucifera*) arranged in a semi-circular pattern. Coconuts at this date might suggest an early dispersal from Southeast Asia. Coconut oil is mentioned in the *PME* as an eastern African trade item. Coconut shells were also found in a fifth-century CE cultural context at Misasa in the Rufiji Delta region (Chami 1994).

The characteristic ceramic of EIA communities – Kwale – has been found in several other coastal and island locations. Two small islands between Mafia and the mainland, Kwale and Koma, have small EIA sites, radiocarbon-dated to the third–sixth centuries CE (Chami and Msemwa 1997). On Zanzibar, Kwale-type sherds have been found in several locations (Chami and Kombo 2009). Most significant for the current discussion is that similar sherds are found in the early levels of Fukuchani and Unguja Ukuu, both later sites with plentiful evidence for overseas trade on Zanzibar, considered to be some of the earliest ‘Swahili’ settlements. Further south along the Tanzanian coast, Early Iron Age pottery has been found in the Kilwa region (near the later Swahili town of Kilwa; Chami 2006b) and on the small island at Mikindani near Mtwara, associated with green and blue alkaline glazed pottery (Kwekason 2013), as well as a number of sites along the coast (Pawlowicz 2013, this volume). There is even a suggestion that people of the EIA tradition may have reached the Comoros (Chami *et al.* 2009).

p.140

The origins of the proto-Swahili

Proto-Swahili settlements are often easier to locate than these earlier EIA sites. From the excavations at Shanga onwards, it was apparent that the defining feature of proto-Swahili occupation was the unglazed earthenware ceramics found in the earliest levels at coastal sites. David Phillipson (1979) drew attention to the similarity between pottery he had seen at the Kiunga (northern Kenya coast), and from a short survey of the middle Tana River basin, near the Pokomo village of Wenje. Initially dubbed ‘Wenje ware’, one of us (MH), while writing up the Shanga pottery, employed the broader term Tana Tradition to describe this earthenware within a longer-term developmental chronology that extended into the second millennium (Horton 1996a). Similar discoveries were being made on the Tanzanian coast by the SAREC teams (led by FC), where it was felt that such a geographical label was inappropriate, with its implications of origin in the Kenyan Tana region. Instead, they termed it Triangular Incised Ware (TIW) after its most distinctive decorative feature: repeating hatched triangles on jars/bowls just below the rim (Chami 1994). The two terms are now used relatively interchangeably depending on the region of study (triangles are more common on Tanzanian sites), with many researchers opting for the shorthand TT/TIW ([Figure 9.1](#); Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2011).

Underlying these nomenclature issues was a wider debate about identity and origin. For

those working on the northern Swahili coast, it was possible that the pottery was related in some way to the Pastoral Neolithic (non-Bantu-speaking) groups of the Rift Valley; decorative similarities were found with pastoralist ceramics from the hinterland (Horton 1990). This fitted into some of the speculation by historians about Swahili origins and the Shungwaya origin myth (Allen 1993), which at its most extreme included a pastoralist ‘empire’ occupying much of North East Africa. Linguistic models consistently posit a north–south movement of proto-Swahili, and thus the Kenyan sites were considered earlier (Nurse and Spear 1985). In fact, it seems that we need to decouple linguistic and ceramic patterns; the earliest examples of TT/TIW are found to the south, in Tanzania, suggesting an origin among the Early Iron Age populations (Chami 1998).

The SAREC project identified a number of sites in eastern Tanzania that were either TT/TIW or EIA (but occupying similar ecological zones), and obtained dated ceramic samples. Typological work suggested that there were ‘transitional wares’ between the two traditions; an extensive statistical analysis using principal component analysis came to similar conclusions from ceramics at Kenyan sites (Helm 2000). In several sites with TT/TIW – particularly those having dates predating 700 CE – significant quantities of potsherds were found to include decorative elements of the EIA tradition. Some sherds had thickened rims and bevels, or even flutes. These ‘transitional’ features in places create whole assemblages that might be seen as a separate phase, which Matiyas (2001) has labelled Mwangia. Dates from TT/TIW sites in Tanzania are consistently earlier, with fifth–sixth-century dates at Mpiji, Unguja Ukuu and Misasa. In sites such as Mkukutu and Kibiti in the Rufiji region, TT/TIW was seen emerging from the EIA cultural horizon, suggesting the former to have been an offspring of the latter (Chami 1994/95). On the coast, TT/TIW settlement is linked to the seventh century CE onwards, suggesting that the origins of this ceramic type, and the practices associated with it, might be found in central Tanzania.



[Figure 9.1](#) Early Tana Tradition ceramics from Dakawa, Tanzania (Photograph by J. Fleisher)

First proto-Swahili settlements

Proto-Swahili communities were probably drawn to the coast initially by its maritime resources. They must have had boats to reach the islands. In the second half of the first millennium, a number of sites sprang up either side of the Zanzibar Channel. These include the New Africa Hotel site in the centre of Dar as Salaam (LaViolette *et al.* 1999); Kunduchi, Kaole (Chami 1994), and Mkadini on the mainland (Chittick 1975); Unguja Ukuu (Chittick 1966; Juma 2004), Fukuchani and Mkokotoni on Zanzibar (Horton *in press*); and Tumbe on Pemba Island (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013). In their initial phases these sites were small (1–2 ha), and located on or adjacent to shallow shelving beaches. The pottery was entirely TT/TIW, with the exception of small quantities of imported bitumen-coated ‘torpedo’ jars from the Persian Gulf, and rare pieces of unglazed Indian pottery. The architecture was entirely daub-constructed; a collapsed house at Tumbe suggests that some of the houses were square, as did a piece of daub from Fukuchani. Subsistence was based on fish and shellfish, with some small hunted mammals, and a small quantity of sorghum and finger millet. Domesticated animals were rare. Craft activities included shell bead-making and iron-working. Glass and glass beads were present in small quantities. By the seventh century these coastal communities were able to exploit their position as potential trade entrepôts.

One place in particular rose in the space of less than 100 years to become the leading

centre for Indian Ocean trade on the coast. Unguja Ukuu, located by a shallow beach, but also protected within Menai Bay (Map 3, p. xxiv), expanded along the beach and along a creek that ran alongside, covering 20 ha at its peak in the ninth century (Juma, this volume). The rapid growth of Unguja Ukuu can be mapped through massive quantities of imported pottery, which on other sites ranged from 2–4 per cent, here exceeded 10 per cent (Horton in press). Around the mid-eighth century, small but significant quantities of Chinese wares began to arrive, along with beads from Sri Lanka and large quantities of glazed and unglazed wares from the Persian Gulf. Tumbe, on Pemba, covered a similar area but was less rich in imported ceramics, glass and beads (Fleisher, this volume; Fleisher and LaViolette 2013).

p.142

Given the quantities of imports, these places clearly had commodities to trade. Ivory, the main staple of African trade, must have been one such commodity, and cultural connections with other TT/TIW communities on the mainland may have enabled trade from a considerable distance inland. Coastal production of shell beads and iron may have been to enable this trade with the interior. Another export may have been slaves; both Kanbalu and Unguja (Pemba and Zanzibar islands) are associated with the Zanj slave trade in Arabic geographies (Horton 2013). This trade reached a peak in the ninth century (Popovic 1976), and probably largely ended with the Zanj revolt (869–883 CE).

The centrality of the Zanzibar Archipelago was challenged in the eighth century as other proto-Swahili clusters emerged, in particular within the other coastal archipelagos. It is unclear whether these spread from Zanzibar or were the result of other TT/TIW communities taking advantage of their locations and moving out to the islands. The Lamu Archipelago represented one centre, with sites on Pate island (Shanga, Pate and Bui), Lamu Island and Manda, and mainland sites at Ungwana and Kiunga (Chittick 1967, 1984; Phillipson 1979; Horton 1984, 1996a; Abungu 1990). The most northerly TT/TIW site known is Gezira, in southern Somalia (Chittick 1969). Southwards, there was some small-scale re-occupation of Mafia Island (Crowther *et al.* 2016). The earliest levels at Kilwa Kisiwani date to this time (Chittick 1974; Wynne-Jones, this volume). Little is known further south, apart from the site of Chibuene (Sinclair 1982; Sinclair *et al.* 2012; Ekblom and Sinclair, this volume) in southern Mozambique, located to take advantage of trade into the southern African interior.

An archipelago of particular interest is the Comoros, a group of four volcanic islands that lie between eastern Africa and Madagascar, generally thought to have been part of the Swahili world (Wright, this volume). The language spoken on the islands – Comorian – is closely related to the Sabaki group (Pokomo and Mijikenda), suggesting settlement from the northern Swahili coast (Nurse and Spear 1985). On each of the islands can be recognised at least one significantly early site: on Ngazja (Grande Comore), Membeni, Gnamawi and M'Bachile; on Mwali (Moheli), Mro Dewa; on Nzwani (Anjouan), Sima

and Domoni; and on Maore (Mayotte), Dembeni and Kongo. Taken together these sites have been classified as the Dembeni phase (Wright 1984, 1992; Allibert 1990; Allibert and Verin 1996). The earliest reliable radiocarbon dates from Sima place this occupation in the early ninth century CE (Crowther *et al.* 2016), although recent work at Membeni by one of us (MH) suggests occupation in the eighth century. They each imported assemblages similar to those from Zanzibar and Lamu: Islamic ceramics from the eighth century onwards, although in generally small proportions, and rare Chinese imports. The local ceramics do differ, however, with TT/TIW styles found on the westernmost islands with its concentration declining eastwards. Dembeni and Sima are dominated by hole-mouth jars with dentate impressions and small zigzag lines, found only rarely on the eastern African coast, as well as red-slipped and red-slip graphite decorated wares – also found at Unguja Ukuu, Shanga and Manda in the ninth century, but in very small quantities (LaViolette, Pemba, this volume).

The Swahili world may have extended to the harbours of northern Madagascar; although no TT/TIW pottery has been found there, a few sherds have been found in river-mouth locations in southwestern Madagascar (Parker Pearson 2010: 79–83). Otherwise the local ceramics are poorly made oxidised wares, with few diagnostic features. Yet at least two sites, Irodo and Nosy Mangabe, have reported turquoise-glazed ware (Sasanian-Islamic) and several sherds of white-glaze from Nosy Mangabe probably date from the ninth century (Vérin 1986; Wright, personal communication). The oldest recorded urban site is Mahilaka, but its earliest levels are late tenth-century (Radimilahy 1998, this volume). There is no evidence for Swahili-speaking communities on Madagascar, and Malagasy – an Austronesian language – was most likely spoken.

p.143

Islam and the emergence of Swahili towns

One of the defining features of ‘Swahiliness’ is the eventual adoption of Islam, and evidence points to the spread of Islam among coastal communities between the eighth–tenth centuries. This did not happen through the arrival of Arabs or Persians, but through the participation of coastal inhabitants in an Islamic, globalised world in the western Indian Ocean. Eastern Africans may have travelled to the Middle East – several sites in Oman contain significant quantities of TT/TIW pottery (Whitcomb 1975) – as much as Middle Eastern merchants arrived on the coast. There were strong incentives for local Swahili to adopt Islam. In a world in which slave raiding was common, incentives included insurance against capture. Islam benefitted all parties through a common legal and commercial system. Traders arriving in the region knew that they could enjoy a degree of security and safety, essential while awaiting the monsoon (Horton 2001, 2004).

One feature that can be observed is that Islam remained on the coast, and did not spread into the interior among other TT/TIW-using groups. No mosques or tombs can be found inland, and it was only in the nineteenth century that sections of the Pokomo and Mijikenda became Muslim. The division between Islamic and non-Islamic societies produced a cultural divide between peoples that were otherwise closely related both genetically and linguistically. It shows that the adoption of Islam by the Swahili was in part through commercial expediency and confined to the towns and their dependant settlements along the coast.

The oldest evidence for Islam comes from the mosque sequences at Shanga, which began around 780, almost from the site's foundation 30 years earlier (Horton 1996a, 2004, this volume). For the next 120 years these timber mosques were regularly replaced, before being built in stone *c.* 900 CE. It is probable that there are other eighth-century mosques at Manda, Tumbe and Unguja Ukuu yet to be excavated. A similar sequence of timber and stone mosques was excavated at Ras Mkumbuu, dating from the ninth century (Horton in press). Along with mosques are locally minted silver coins with Islamic inscriptions, dating to the ninth century in the Lamu Archipelago and tenth century on Pemba (Horton *et al.* 1986). Only Islamic-style burials have been found in these settlements.

The Comoros may have become Islamic by the eighth century, with mosque floors above a single radiocarbon date in a basal deposit (Moustakim and Chami 2015). Thirteenth-century mosques at Sima and Domoni have wooden predecessors that may date to the eleventh century or earlier (Wright 1992). Islamic burials have been found at Domoni (twelfth century?), and those at Membeni, eroding from the cliff edge and excavated in 2016, are associated with TIW/TT pottery. On Madagascar, the earliest known mosque is at Mahilaka and may be thirteenth century (Radimilahy 1998). An Islamic burial, so far undated but pre-fifteenth century, was excavated by one of us (MH) at Ampasimahavelona, near Vohémar.

Other changes reflect integration of the Swahili into the cultures of the Indian Ocean. The use of stone architecture, particularly undersea *Porites* coral, dates to around 900, where it was used for ceremonial buildings and a mosque at Shanga (Horton 1996a). Numerous tenth-century stone buildings are recorded at Manda, as well as the use of fired bricks that may have been imported from the Gulf as ballast (Chittick 1984: 39). A substantial stone building – possibly a mosque – was built at Unguja Ukuu at this time (Juma 2004). The appearance of spindle whorls suggests local production of textiles. Local pottery underwent a significant shift away from the large jars associated with TT/TIW, into smaller vessels such as hole-mouth jars and small bowls; red-slip decoration becomes more common. The imported pottery also shifted from large glazed and unglazed jars to small bowls.

From the tenth century these settlements can be confidently described as urban (Fleisher 2010; Sinclair, this volume). They certainly were functioning as ports, and some public

buildings (for example, stone buildings at Shanga and Manda) as well as mosques might be recognised. Some were minting their own silver currency, suggesting a degree of political authority (Horton *et al.* 1986). All had networks along the coast and into the Middle East and beyond. The size of places such as Manda, Tumbe and Unguja Ukuu suggest populations in the thousands. It is a remarkable transformation from what were beach-line settlements only 300 years earlier, and testament to the energy and creativity of African society.

p.144

References

- Abungu, G. H. O. 1990. 'Communities on the River Tana, Kenya: an archaeological study of relations between the delta and the river basin, AD 700–1890'. PhD diss., University of Cambridge.
- Allen, J. de V. 1982. 'The "Shirazi" problem in East African coastal history'. *Paideuma* 28: 9–28.
- Allen, J. de V. 1993. *Swahili Origins: Swahili Culture and the Shungwaya Phenomenon*. London: James Currey.
- Allibert, C. 1990. 'Le site de Dembeni (Mayotte, Archipel des Comores)'. *Études Océan Indien* 11: 63–172.
- Allibert, C. and Vérin, P. 1996. 'The early pre-Islamic history of the Comores Islands: links with Madagascar and Africa'. In *The Indian Ocean in Antiquity*, edited by J. Reade, 461–70. London: Kegan Paul.
- Asante, M. K. 2015. *The History of Africa: The Quest for Eternal Harmony*. New York: Routledge.
- Baxter, H. C. 1944. 'Pangani: the trade centre of Ancient History'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 17: 15–25.
- Berggren, J. L. and Jones, A. 2000. *Ptolemy's Geography: An Annotated Translation of the Theoretical Chapters*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Bolliger, B. *et al.* (Ed.) 2005. *Egypt: Land and Lives of the Pharaohs Revealed*. Willoughby: Global Book Publishing.
- Casson, L. 1989. *The Periplus Maris Erythraei: Text with Introduction, Translation and Commentary*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Chami, F. 1994. *The Tanzanian Coast in the First Millennium ad.* Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis.
- Chami, F. 1994/95. 'The first millennium AD on the East Coast: a new look at cultural sequence and interactions'. *Azania* 29/30: 232–7.

- Chami, F. 1998. 'A review of Swahili archaeology'. *African Archaeological Review* 15 (3): 199–218.
- Chami, F. 1999a. 'Roman beads from the Rufiji Delta, Tanzania: first incontrovertible evidence of an archaeological link with the *Periplus*'. *Current Anthropology* 40 (2): 237–41.
- Chami, F. 1999b. 'The Early Iron Age on Mafia and its relationship with the mainland'. *Azania* 34: 1–10.
- Chami, F. 2001. 'The archaeology of the Rufiji region since 1987 to 2000'. *Studies in the African Past* 1: 7–21.
- Chami, F. 2004. 'The archaeology of the Mafia Archipelago, Tanzania'. In *African Archaeology Network: Reports and Views*, edited by F. Chami, G. Pwiti and C. Radimilahy, 73–101. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press.
- Chami, F. 2006a. *The Unity of African Ancient History 3000 bc to ad 500*. Dar es Salaam: E&D Ltd.
- Chami, F. 2006b. 'The archaeology of pre-Islamic Kilwa Kisiwani'. *Studies in the African Past* 5: 119–50.
- Chami, F. 2017. 'Ancient seafaring in eastern African Indian Ocean waters'. In *The Sea in History: Antiquity*, edited by P. De Souza, 523–35. London: Boydell & Brewer.
- Chami, F. and Kombo, J. 2009. 'Reconnaissance survey of southern Zanzibar Island'. In *Zanzibar and the Swahili Coast from 30000 years ago*, edited by F. Chami, 95–105. Dar es Salaam: E&D Ltd.
- Chami, F. and Kwekason, A. 2003. 'Neolithic pottery traditions from the islands, the coast and the interior of East Africa'. *African Archaeological Review* 20 (2): 65–80.
- Chami, F. and Msemwa, P. 1997. 'A new look at culture and trade on the Azanian Coast'. *Current Anthropology* 38 (4): 673–81.
- Chami, F., Tabiboi, I. and Abdouroihamane, B. 2009. 'Preliminary report of archaeological work conducted on the southern Ngazija Island'. In *Zanzibar and the Swahili Coast from 30000 years ago*, edited by F. Chami, 115–28. Dar es Salaam: E&D Ltd.
- Chittick, H. N. 1965. 'The "Shirazi" colonisation of East Africa'. *Journal of African History* 6: 275–94.
- Chittick, H. N. 1966. 'Six early coins from near Tanga'. *Azania* 1: 156–7.
- Chittick, H. N. 1967. 'Discoveries in the Lamu Archipelago'. *Azania* 2: 37–67.
- Chittick, H. N. 1969. 'An archaeological reconnaissance of the southern Somali Coast'. *Azania* 4: 115–30.
- Chittick, H. N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*. 2 Vols. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Chittick, H. N. 1975. 'An early salt-working site on the Tanzanian coast'. *Azania* 10: 151–

- Chittick, H. N. 1977. 'The East Coast, Madagascar and the Indian Ocean'. In *Cambridge History of Africa, Vol. 3*, edited by R. Oliver, 183–231. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chittick, H. N. 1984. *Manda: Excavations at an Island Port on the Kenya Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Coupland, R. 1938. *East Africa and Its Invaders, from the Earliest Times to the Death of Seyyid Said in 1856*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Crowther, A., Faulkner, P., Prendergast, M., Quintana Morales, E., Horton, M., Wilmsen, E., *et al.* 2016. 'Coastal subsistence and island colonization in eastern African prehistory'. *Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology* 11: 211–37.
- Fleisher, J. 2010. 'Swahili synoecism: rural settlements and town formation on the central East African coast, AD 750–1500'. *Journal of Field Archaeology* 35 (3): 265–82.
- Fleisher, J. and LaViolette, A. 2013. 'The early Swahili trade village of Tumbe, Pemba Island, Tanzania, AD 600–950'. *Antiquity* 87: 1151–68.
- Fleisher, J. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2011. 'Ceramics and the early Swahili: deconstructing the Early Tana Tradition'. *African Archaeological Review* 28: 245–78.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1962a. *The Medieval History of the Coast of Tanganyika, with Special Reference to Recent Archaeological Discoveries*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1962b. *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the First to the Earlier Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Helm, R. 2000. 'Conflicting histories: the archaeology of ironworking, farming communities in the central and southern coast region of Kenya'. PhD diss., University of Bristol.
- Horton, M. 1984. 'The early settlement of the northern Swahili coast'. PhD diss., University of Cambridge.
- Horton, M. 1986. 'Asiatic colonization of the East African coast: the Manda evidence'. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2: 201–13.
- Horton, M. 1990. 'The *Periplus* and East Africa'. *Azania* 25: 95–9.
- Horton, M. 1996a. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. 1996b. 'Early maritime trade and settlement along the East African coast'. In *The Indian Ocean in Antiquity*, edited by J. Reade, 439–60. London: KPI.
- Horton, M. 2001. 'The Islamic conversion of the Swahili coast 750–1500: some archaeological and historical evidence'. In *Islam in East Africa: New Sources*, edited by B. S. Amoretti, 449–69. Rome: Herda.
- Horton, M. 2004. 'Islam, archaeology and Swahili identity'. In *Changing Social Identity with the Spread of Islam: Archaeological Perspectives*, edited by D. Whitcomb, 67–88. Chicago:

Oriental Institute Seminar 1.

Horton, M. 2013. 'Ibadis in East Africa: archaeological and historical evidence'. In *Oman and Overseas*, edited by M. Hoffmann-Ruf, A. al-Salimi and H. Gaube, 93–106. Tübingen: OLMS.

Horton, M. in press. *Zanzibar and Pemba: The Archaeology of an Indian Ocean Archipelago*. London: Ashgate/BIEA.

Horton, M. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Horton, M., Brown, H. W. and Oddy, W. A. 1986. 'The Mtambwe hoard'. *Azania* 21: 115–23.

Huntingford, G. W. B. (Ed.) 1980. *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*. London: Hakluyt Society.

Juma, A. 2004. *Unguja Ukuu on Zanzibar: An Archaeological Study of Early Urbanism*. Uppsala: Studies in Global Archaeology 3.

Kirkman, J. 1954. *The Arab City of Gedi: Excavations at the Great Mosque, Architecture and Finds*. London: Oxford University Press.

Kirkman, J. 1959. 'Excavations at Ras Mkumbuu on the Island of Pemba'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 53: 161–78.

Kirkman, J. 1961. 'Notes'. In *The Portuguese Period in East Africa*, by J. Strandes (Trans. and Ed. J. F. Wallwork and J. S. Kirkman), 289–317. Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau.

Kirwan, L. P. 1986. 'Rhapta, metropolis of Azania'. *Azania* 21: 99–104.

Kitchen, K. 2004. 'The elusive land of Punt revisited'. In *Trade and Travel in the Red Sea Region*, edited by P. Lund and A. Porter, 25–31. Oxford: BAR International Series 12.

p.146

Kwekason, A. 2013. 'Nkope: the Early Ironworking pottery tradition of southern coastal Tanzania'. *African Archaeological Review* 30 (2): 145–67.

Kwekason, A. and Walz, J. 2015. 'Material crosscurrents at ancient Mlongo, Mafia Island, Tanzania'. *The Current* 3 (2): 10–11.

Lacroix, W. F. G. 1998. *Africa in Antiquity*. Saarbrücken: Verlag für Entwicklungspolitik GmbH.

LaViolette, A., Fawcett, W., Karoma, N.J. and Schmidt, P. R. 1999. 'Survey and excavation between Dar es Salaam and Bagamoyo: University of Dar Salaam Field School 1988 ([part 2](#))'. *Nyame Akuma* 52: 74–8.

Matiyas, B. 2001. 'Excavations at Mngaru, an Early Iron Working Phase site in the Rufiji region'. *Studies in the African Past* 1: 30–40.

Moustakim, I. and Chami, F. 2015. 'Archaeological excavation of the earliest known mosque in Comoros and East Africa'. *Studies in the African Past* 12: 8–30.

- Ntandu, C. 2015. 'Preliminary report on Early Iron Working settlement at Marambe in Tanga region, northern Tanzania'. *Studies in the African Past* 12: 39–57.
- Nurse, D. and Hinnebusch, T. J. 1993. *Swahili and Sabaki: A Linguistic History*. Los Angeles: University of California Publications in Linguistics (Vol. 121).
- Nurse, D. and Spear, T. 1985. *The Swahili: Reconstructing the History and Language of an African Society, 800–1500*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Parker Pearson, M. 2010. *Pastoralists, Warriors and Colonists: The Archaeology of Southern Madagascar*. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports.
- Pawlowicz, M. 2013. 'Review of ceramics from Tanzania, Malawi, and northern Mozambique, with implications for Swahili archaeology'. *African Archaeological Review* 30 (4): 367–98.
- Pearce, F. B. 1920. *Zanzibar: The Island Metropolis of Eastern Africa*. London: T. Fisher Unwin.
- Phillipson, D. W. 1979. 'Some Iron Age sites in the lower Tana valley'. *Azania* 14: 155–60.
- Popovic, A. 1976. *La Révolte des Esclaves en Iraq au III/IX siècle*. Paris: Paul Guethner.
- Pradines, S. 2014. 'Swahili archaeology'. In *Encyclopaedia of Global Archaeology*, edited by C. Smith, 7162–73. New York: Springer.
- Radimilahy, C. 1998. *Mahilaka: An Archaeological Investigation of an Early Town in Northwestern Madagascar*. Uppsala: Studies in African Archaeology 15.
- Sinclair, P. 1982. 'Chibuene: an early trading site in southern Mozambique'. *Paideuma* 28: 149–64.
- Sinclair, P., Ekblom, A. and Wood, M. 2012. 'Trade and society on the south-east African coast in the later first millennium AD: the case of Chibuene'. *Antiquity* 86 (333): 723–37.
- Smith, M. C. and Wright, H. T. 1988. 'The ceramics from Ras Hafun in Somalia: notes on a Classical maritime site'. *Azania* 23: 115–41.
- Spear, T. T. 1981. 'Oral traditions: whose history?' *History in Africa* 8: 165–81.
- Spear, T. T. 1984. 'The Shirazi in Swahili traditions, culture and history'. *History in Africa* 11: 291–305.
- Stevenson, E. L. (Trans. and Ed.) 1991. *The Geography of Claudius Ptolemy*. New York: Dover Publications (facsimile reprint of 1932 Ed., pub. by New York Public Library).
- Vérin, P. 1986. *The History of Civilisation in North Madagascar*. Rotterdam: Balkema.
- Whitcomb, D. 1975. 'The archaeology of Oman: a preliminary discussion of the Islamic periods'. *Journal of Oman Studies* 1: 123–57.
- Wright, H. T. 1984. 'Early seafarers of the Comoro Islands: the Dembeni Phase of the IX–Xth centuries'. *Azania* 19: 13–59.
- Wright, H. T. 1992. 'Early Islam, oceanic trade and town development on Nzwani: the Comorian Archipelago in the XIth–XVth centuries'. *Azania* 28: 81–128.

10

SWAHILI ORAL TRADITIONS AND CHRONICLES

Anna Rita Coppola

This chapter seeks to describe what Swahili oral traditions and chronicles are, and to explain their symbolic language. The main focus will be on the initial episode narrated in these traditions, fundamental to the understanding of the story. At first, the chronicles were handed down from generation to generation orally; but after the arrival of the colonial powers, the Swahili began to commit them to text. In the nineteenth century the chronicles acquired a new political meaning highlighted by this new way of conveying them, even though their social symbolism did not change. Thus, even if the identical meaning was intended at all points in time, the use of that meaning changed due to the different historical context. In pre-colonial times, Swahili chronicles had the function of ‘remembering’ the history of the city for the community and its members who shared the same past, thus forging and strengthening community identity from within. With the establishment of foreign polities, the chronicles were used to legitimate the Swahili social, economic and political model against a new order. Identity categories and ‘social ranks’ in coastal civilisation had been fluid and flexible, making it possible to ‘absorb’ oceanic migrations; social conditions, however, were fixed by the advent of colonialism. At the time Swahili society, threatened by foreigners, had to assert its own identity in contraposition with and in response to the outside. If the narration of the past has always reflected the elements characterising Swahili identity, in the twentieth century the chronicles acquired the physical role of *lieux de mémoire*. As Peter Burke (1989) points out, an element not to be underestimated in the study of a *collective identity* is the *social memory*, that is the image of the past held by a group and shared by all of its members. But, ‘collective memory is not that of an organic group whose faculty of recall would be similar to the personal memory of an individual; rather, collective memory is a means of producing meanings which belong to a political field’ (Jewsiewicki and Mudimbe 1993: 10). In this perspective the role of the chronicles is that of a place, known to all, around which the Swahili built their identity and which functioned to support political power and social position for particular groups threatened by foreigners and social changes.

An Omani story narrates that during the reign of the Umayyad Sultan ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (685–705 CE), Sa‘īd and Sulaymān al-Ġulandānī, co-regents of Oman, fled to the Bilād al-Zanġ, the eastern African coast, with their followers and families. This migration was caused by the invasion of al-Ḥaġġāġ, governor of Iraq, who had sent an army to conquer their country (al-Sālimī 1997: 71–3; Ibn Ruzayq 2001: 188–9). This story is echoed by traditions narrated on the eastern coast of Africa testifying to the ancient connections linking the two coasts and the cosmopolitanism of Swahili society (Spear 1984; LaViolette 2008). The Kilindini, one of the twelve tribes (*mataifa*) ruling Mombasa, claim that their name stems from the time the Banī Ġulandá of Oman migrated to Africa. These immigrants reached the coast via the Indian Ocean, an important trading medium keeping the different societies and cultures bordering its waters in contact. As customs, practices, and traditions travel along with people, making exchanges and contact of cultures possible, the Indian Ocean played an important role in the imaginary of the Swahili as they lay at one of the terminal ends of the oceanic trade. On the ocean waters sailed those Arab immigrants of the eastern African coastal traditions, which have recorded the foundation of Swahili cities.

p.148

Introduction

At the end of the fifteenth century when the Portuguese rounded the Cape of Good Hope, they found on the western shores of the Indian Ocean some independent cities that shared a common culture and language, and were part of the same civilisation, that of the Swahili. It was not possible to speak of a Swahili reign or empire, every city being ruled by its own sultan or council of elders, and having a relationship with the populations surrounding the town. Being independent, each had its own history to tell. It was in a Portuguese work that the narration of the foundation of a Swahili city was reported for the first time: the *Chronicle of Kilwa*.

In the nineteenth century Europeans called at the Swahili urban ports and began to collect traditions narrated orally by the local population about the foundation and history of their cities (Owen 1833; Guillaín 1856; Krapf 1860; Steere 1870; Burton 1872; Strong 1895). These kinds of works are typical of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. Missionaries, highly interested in coastal culture, played a great role in collecting local stories. With passing time, manuscripts of historical texts – the Swahili chronicles – came to light.

The beginning: the first chronicles

In 1877, Sultan Barghash gave the British consul the manuscript copy of the Arabic version of the *Kilwa Chronicle*. The manuscript was found in the papers of Sheykh Muḥyī al-Dīn, a Somali qāḍī in Zanzibar, after his death. On the flyleaf¹ the British consul annotated: ‘this MS given to the British Museum is the copy of an abstract prepared from a large Arabic History known as the Sinet el Kilawia, of which no copy is known to exist now, although there (may) yet be one found on the African coast’ (Freeman-Grenville 1962: 45). This is a common feature of the Swahili chronicles; the original manuscripts were said to be missing or destroyed, as the following examples show. In 1938, Hichens (1938: 3) published the translation of the *Lamu Chronicle*, that ‘as the subscription to the manuscript records, it is a copy, made to the order of Abdallah bin Hamed, Wali of Lamu, c. 1897, from older chronicles’. Unfortunately, he failed to provide other information on these ‘older chronicles’. However, the colophon of the Swahili text states: *maneno haya yote tumenakili kwa Shaibu Faraji bin Hamed al-Bakariy al-Lamuy*; that is, ‘all these words we have recorded from Shaibu Faraji bin Hamed al-Bakariy al-Lamuy’. The Swahili verb *nakili* comes from the Arab *naqala* which means to record, to transmit, etc. It is possible that those ‘older chronicles’ circulated orally and were later written down for the use of European scholars and colonial officials. During the bombardment of the Sultanate of Witu, the *Book of the Kings of Pate*, an authoritative version of the Pate chronicle in possession of its sultans, was destroyed (Werner 1915: 149). During the sack of Vanga and the fight in Pongwe district, a rebellion against the British government, Hollis stated that ‘many priceless books and documents belonging to the Arab settlers were lost, amongst them the *Chronicle of Vumba Kuu*. These, I am told, were contained in a single manuscript volume’ (1900: 276). It is not certain if the manuscripts of the chronicles actually existed or were an ‘invention’ of local people to ‘dignify’ the Swahili cultural tradition in the eyes of Europeans who usually never saw the original manuscripts. What is important is that these chronicles were recorded at this point and could then be physically handed down. They became important sources for the study of eastern African coastal history and the origins of Swahili civilisation. An element fundamental to understanding the role of the Swahili chronicles is their contemporary circulation in oral and written form. While the written chronicles were the proof of a certain socio-political order, legitimated in the past and so to maintain the status quo; the oral chronicles could be continuously revised and modified as political and social changes took place.

p.149

The arrival of immigrants and the foundation of cities

Vansina (1985: 27) has defined oral traditions as ‘verbal messages which are reported statements from the past beyond the present generation’. This definition applies to Swahili chronicles, or to parts of them. Indeed, the written chronicles cannot be considered oral

traditions anymore. But what are the Swahili chronicles? Some have considered them as mere genealogies or royal chronicles. Simply, they are narrations recording, in symbolical and historical ways, the history of Swahili cities, and/or a group within them.

Generally, the first recorded event in the chronicles takes place between the seventh and the twelfth century CE and concerns the foundation of the cities. It tells of Muslim immigrants who, for some reason, had to leave their homeland and voyaged to the eastern African coast. There, they met the indigenous ‘infidel’ people from whom they acquired the land on which to settle. The mode of acquiring the land varies in the chronicles: usually it is by marriage with a daughter of the local ruler or by buying the land with clothes or other trade items. In some cases, the indigenous people try to gain back the ‘rented’ land,² but the newcomers succeeded in keeping it in various ways. Then, the narration keeps recording other migrations to eastern Africa and the city history, usually until the Omani period. As shown in the list below, even if the details differ in each narration, the basic narrative pattern of the founding episode remains unchanged. As in most of the chronicles the immigrants came from Shiraz (Persia); as such they are also known as the Shirazi traditions (Spear 1984). However, other traditions, handed down especially by the Mijikenda, point to Shungwaya – a not well identified place, probably a region between Kenya and Somalia³ (Morton 1972; Spear 1982; Allen 1983, 1993; Walsh 1992; Willis 1993; Park 2012) – as the homeland of the first immigrants arrived on the coast, or to an Arab origin, as in the case of the Kilindini or the Bajuni (see Horton Chami, Ray, this volume). Due to their oral circulation, some narrative elements, names, places and features are common to different chronicles. However, three traditions from the southern Swahili coast differ from the usual narrative pattern. They highlight the African elements and connections of the Swahili more than their ‘specificity’ in the coastal panorama (Pawlowicz and LaViolette 2013).

List of oral traditions and chronicles

The following list is not complete. Some oral traditions and chronicles were collected by Velten (1907) and translated in Freeman-Grenville (1962). Other chronicles were published and translated in various numbers of the journal *Swahili*. A quite interesting tradition from Pangani reported by Baker (1941) narrates that ‘in the tenth century CE seven dhow-loads of Persians left Shiraz for the Azanian coast as the result of a quarrel between their leaders and the Sultan of Muscat’. Other traditions on the Swahili Sultanate of Tungi were found in Mozambique (Rzewuski 1991). It is impossible to quantify exactly how many chronicles and traditions exist, because some of them are still circulating (Park 2012). It is enough to say that Tolmacheva (1993) lists eight different versions of the *Pate Chronicle* and, probably, more are still to be discovered in private libraries or archives. Pouwels (1984: 258) mentions another oral tradition, collected by Elisabeth Wangari

Rugoiya, narrating that an Arab was given power and ruled because the elders were doing wrong; when they wanted to take everything, the Pateans refused. Later the sultan invited a sharif from Mecca to reconcile the Arabs and Africans when he felt he had made a mistake. After the reconciliation party, the Arabs killed 'all the Africans who were at the Baraza'.

p.150

- 1 *Kilwa Chronicle* (Portuguese version, de Barros 1777: 224–31): the Shirazi prince Ale ('Alī) fled from his country after the death of his father, the king, because his mother was an Abyssinian slave (*abexijs*). During his journey toward the coast of Africa (Zanguebar) he arrived at Kilwa. He wished to settle there because Kilwa, being an island, could provide him safety from the infidels. So with cloth, he bought the island from its inhabitants who then moved to the mainland. After that the Shirazi prince fortified the place to prevent attacks from infidels.
- 2 *Kilwa Chronicle* (Arabic version, Strong 1895): the Shirazi prince 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan left his country with his brothers and father in seven ships. Each one called at different places and founded a city. 'Alī disembarked at Kilwa where he found a Muslim man, Muli, a non-Muslim, also lived there. The Shirazi obtained permission from Muli to settle on the island, but first he had to encircle the island with cloth. Muli took the cloth and moved to the mainland. Then the Shirazi prince dug a channel between Kilwa, an island only during the high tide, and the mainland so that Muli would not be able to return to the island.
- 3 *Kilwa Chronicle* (Swahili version, collected by Velten 1907): the first men to be in Kilwa were of the clan Mtakata, then Mrimba and his followers of the Mmatshinga tribe came and settled there. The Shirazi Ali bin Selimani arrived and asked permission from Mrimba to settle at Kilwa. After obtaining permission the Shirazi sultan married Mrimba's daughter and persuaded his father-in-law to move to the mainland because it was not possible for both of them to rule over Kilwa. Ali spread cloth from Kilwa to the mainland like a pathway and gave it to Mrimba. When the latter wanted to go back to Kilwa, they were prevented from crossing the channel by the magical divide created between island and mainland through the Shirazi sultan reading the Koran.
- 4 *Pate Chronicle* (Stigand's version, [1913] 1966; recorded from Bwana Kitini, a descendant of the Pate sultans and an authoritative keeper of traditions): in 77 ah Abdul Malik b. Muriani⁴ sent Syrians to settle a new kingdom in eastern Africa. They built the cities of Pate, Malindi, Zanzibar, Mombasa, Lamu and Kilwa. When Harun al-Rashid came to power and heard of what Abdul Malik had done there, he gathered people, specifically Persians, and gave them money to settle eastern Africa themselves. Several centuries after the Persians, the Nabāhina arrived in Pate and sent gifts to its chief (a descendant of the Arabs sent by Abdul Malik). The Nabhānī Sultan

Suleiman bin Suleiman married the chief's daughter and ruled over Pate.

- 5 *A Swahili History of Pate* (Werner's version, 1915, translated from a manuscript she received from Mr Hollis; the story was recorded from Bwana Kitini in 1903 by order of the wali of Lamu): the chronicle opens with the arrival of the Nabhānī Sultan Seleman bin Seleman⁵ to Pate in the year 600 ah. In Pate, he married the king's daughter al-Batawina. Seven days after the marriage, he went to his father-in-law who passed the kingdom to him.⁶
- 6 *Khabar al-Lamu* (Hichens 1938): the first people to arrive at Lamu were Arabs from Damascus during the reign of Abd al-Malik b. Marwan. In time, other Arabs came to East Africa, gained power and settled at Hedabu, near Weyuni. The Arabs wanted to subjugate the people of Weyuni and began to fight. In the end the Arabs of Hedabu subdued the Arabs of Weyuni by trickery, mingled together, and chose a chief.
- 7 *Kitab al-Zunuj* (Cerulli 1957, a critical edition from two manuscripts from Mogadishu and Witu):⁷ in the pre-Islamic era the Kashūr inhabited the eastern African coast near the Jubba river; their capital was named Shungwaya. Arabs from Yemen came to the coast and built Mogadishu and Bosasa (Mombasa?), Kilwa, Pate, Siyu, Lamu and Ghama. When the Arabs came, the Zunuj (Africans) fled but in the end they came to live in peace with each other. Other Arabs arrived on the eastern coast of Africa because of the war at Sawakin and Berbera. Then the Banu Ghaylān⁸ came to the coast and the Zunuj fled from their cities, but some remained at Shungwaya. The Kashūr came to the Tana river, others went to Bosasa in the Giryama region. During the reign of Abd al-Malik b. Marwan, Arabs from Syria came to the coast. Their amir taught the Koran and Islam to the coastal people and built a castle at Kilwa. During the Abbasids, Harun al-Rashid sent troops to eastern Africa and appointed non-Arab governors. And so the eastern African coast was under Abbasid rule.
- 8 *Vumba Kuu Chronicle* (elders, experts of traditions, related the chronicle to Hollis, 1900): Mwana Chambi, nicknamed Zumbura, who was enthroned in 600 ah, is supposed to have discovered the Vumba country. Nine sultans succeeded him, until war erupted between Vumba and the eight towns ruled by the Shirazi who did not want to accept Vumba rule. In the end the inhabitants of Vumba won and the Shirazi towns were subdued under harsh conditions.
- 9 *Chronicle of Ngazija* (Grand Comoro; Said Bakari wrote the manuscript in 1897, edited in 1977): the first inhabitants of Ngazidja were from the Mrima coast and built several villages. Then these people were fought and defeated by the Mabeja, who in turn ruled over the villages. Sometime later, the Shirazi arrived at Ngazidja, fought with the Mabeja and ruled over the villages.
- 10 *Chronicle of Anjouan* (Pouwels 1984: 257): an Arab arrived on the island and married the daughter of the sultan. Four generations later, a Persian came and married the

daughter of the king and became king himself. His granddaughter married a man from Pate and their son moved the capital to Domoni.

- 11 *Zanzibar chronicles* (Kirkman 1980): three Shirazi brothers came to eastern Africa. One went to Kilwa, the second went to Johanna, and the third to Zanzibar. The latter displayed his richness and gave gifts to the Hadimu who made him governor of their country. Then he married a Hadimu girl, and their daughter became governor and married an Arab from the Lealawi tribe (Alawi) of Aden.
 - 12 *Kua Tradition – Mafia Island* (Velten 1907: 297–9): the original inhabitants of the island were Shirazi, then the Arabs arrived and asked for a place to settle. The Shirazi gave them a place in the north where the Arabs built a town. The Arabs and the Shirazi intermarried until the former strengthened, became rulers and acted wrongly towards the Shirazi. For this reason, the King of Kisimani Mafia tricked and killed an Arab, after which the Arabs of Kua got revenge.
 - 13 *Mafia Island tradition* (Piggott 1941): ‘it is said that the first inhabitants were the Wambwera, a coastal tribe’. Then the Shirazi, who settled on the Jibondo island to the south-east of Mafia and were from Kilwa Kisiwani, came to the island and intermarried with the people. The last people to come to Mafia were Arabs who intermarried with the Shirazi, the dominant people.
- p.152
- 14 *Bajuni origin* (Grottanelli 1955: 202–10 and Appendix II): the name Bajun comes from Banī Juni, pointing out an Arab origin. The text narrates different genealogies of different Bajuni clans. In general, in 660 ah the Banī Juni and other clans emigrated from Yemen and Hijaz and arrived on the African coast where they built the coastal cities.
 - 15 *VaFerado and VaShiradhi traditions*: the Bajuni lineages and clans came from Yemen and Hijaz. However, the VaFerado tribe claims to have come from Shams (Syria), while the VaShiradhi descend from two brothers who came from a country between Yemen and Ajam (Persia). The two brothers are Omar and Ali b. Sa‘id b. ‘Abdallah.
 - 16 *The Emozaydy tradition* (de Barros 1777: 205–8); they were Arabs persecuted in their land because of their opinions contrary to the Koran. So they sailed toward the coast of Africa. After them, other Arabs settled in eastern Africa because they were persecuted by the King of Laça.⁹ In eastern Africa they founded the cities of Mogadishu and Barawa. The Emozaydy did not submit to the new Arabs, retreating to the interior of Africa where they joined the kafir (infidels).
 - 17 *Mombasa tradition* (Berg 1968): the first ruler of Mombasa was the queen Mwana Mkisi whose city was known as Kongowea or Gongwa. Shehe Mvita, a foreigner coming from Shiraz, settled in Kongowea, after being refused the right to live in cities north of Mombasa.
 - 18 A chronicle of Mombasa prepared on two texts (one originally written in Swahili but

translated into Arabic, the other in Arabic) is in Freeman-Grenville (1962). It narrates that the last Shirazi chief in Mombasa was called Shahu Mvita. During his reign the Portuguese arrived at Mombasa. Knappert (1964) published and translated a third chronicle of Mombasa in Swahili stating that the original inhabitants of Mombasa originated from Shiraz, and after them other people from Arabia came to the city.

- 19 *The WaChangamwe*: the Changamwe called themselves Banu Umayya, or Umayyads, and were followers of Ali. Because of this, they got lost into the bush. Later on, the Banu Imran came to eastern Africa and reconverted them to Islam.
- 20 *The WaJomvu*: from North Africa and Iraq, they moved to Medina and became Muslim. After a dispute with the caliph Omar, they moved to eastern Africa, coming to Shungwaya and Jomvu.
- 21 *The WaTangana*: they claim they are descendants of two groups from Persia who intermarried, the WaShirazi and WaMola.

Narration and meaning

When historians and scholars first knew of Swahili chronicles and studied them, they accepted at face value what they narrated about the foreign origins of Swahili cities. At the time, the idea of Africa as an uncivilised continent to which civilisation was brought from outside was largely accepted. The chronicles confirmed this idea, especially the foundation episode recorded in each tradition: scholars accepted that migrations from the Arabian Peninsula and Persia had given birth to an Arab/Persian civilisation in eastern Africa. This idea lasted for many years until new research, primarily in the fields of linguistics and archaeology, began to change the historiography, challenging the ‘foreign-centric’ idea of Swahili origins (LaViolette and Wynne-Jones, this volume).

In the 1970s–80s, scholars began to reassess the African elements of Swahili civilisation and the oral traditions and chronicles played a decisive role in this re-evaluation of the Swahili past. The analysis of oral traditions, which merged into the study of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Swahili chronicles, became crucial: they were re-read and deconstructed. Pouwels (1987) pointed out that oral traditions regarding Swahili cities have to be considered foundation myths, namely stories about the ‘cultural history’ of Swahili communities, in which the acceptance of Islam constituted the central moment in the process of self-definition. The traditions narrated how Swahili people emerged culturally, differentiated from other eastern African populations. The elements distinguishing the Swahili were identified as urbanity – characterised by the social organisation of the city space expressing a binary opposition between outsiders and insiders – trade and Islam, all of which translated symbolically in the traditions and chronicles. From this perspective, the key to finding the deep meaning of Swahili oral traditions and chronicles was to understand their symbolic language.

According to this historical reassessment, the starting point to decode the oral traditions is to consider that ‘the essential difficulty faced by the Swahili town was the same as that encountered by any society when it experiences significantly large numbers of immigrants, that of maintaining order and continuity in its development while creating unity out of diversity, one society out of the remnants of many’ (Pouwels 1984: 248). The function of Swahili traditions and chronicles was that of elaborating and resolving the opposing ‘forces’, internal and external to Swahili society and communities, caused by fluxes of immigrants and, in the nineteenth century, by the colonial powers. The opposing forces were generated by the frontier character of Swahili civilisation, sited between the Indian Ocean macro-region and the African interior. The Swahili had to confront ‘foreign’ worlds outside and inside their cities. Indeed, mercantile activities brought traders and settlers to the coast seasonally, people who were ‘absorbed’ into the stratified social structure of the cities, so that the structure itself kept continuously readjusting. The foundation myths of the chronicles show the constitution of the Swahili, the institutionalisation of that given social structure and the centrality of Islam in defining the Swahili themselves. The Shirazi symbolise the proto-Swahili, the original inhabitants of the coast who differentiate from the neighbouring population – as illustrated by the Kilwan allegory of the separation from the mainland – through the construction of walled cities and stone buildings, the specialisation in trade and the conversion to Islam, which arrived via Indian Ocean missionaries, merchants and traders. The Swahili, at first cultivators and iron-workers, were later involved more and more in trade, became Muslim and lived in walled cities. In this view, the descendants of the Shirazi, the first Swahili, were the members of long-established families of the coastal towns: the *waungwana*, the elites, the owners of the urban Islamic culture, who were at the top of the social pyramid. The conversion to Islam implied the construction of a long and prestigious genealogy going back to the heartland of Islam, a genealogy that added prestige to the family, clan or lineage. Spear (1984: 295) states: ‘each group had their own specific traditions and such traditions varied through time with the rise and fall of different groups’. The genealogies of the oral traditions and chronicles were thus to legitimate the place in the Swahili society of certain families or groups: an element crucial to the use of the chronicles during colonialism. Moreover, as Swahili roots plunged into African soil, to legitimate the possession of power and land the new settlers had to marry the daughter of the previous ‘African’ chief or buy the land from local inhabitants. In some traditions, the Arabs coming after the Shirazi exemplified the new immigrants, who were Muslim and immigrants like the Shirazi and, for this reason, had high status but were not equal to them. The Shirazi were the founders of Swahili cities, those who had given birth to the Swahili Islamic, urban and mercantile civilisation, unique in the eastern Africa panorama. For these reasons, their status was the highest in Swahili society. As immigrants, the Arabs had to be absorbed into the social fabric and, as shown by traditions, it could happen in different ways.

Spear (1984: 299) clearly explains the ultimate meaning of the chronicles:

in the language of traditions, immigrant traders arrived, gave gifts to the indigenous inhabitants, fought them and married them, and inherited rights to the land and to political power. In the language of social science, the traders arrived as strangers, paid tribute to the indigenous peoples, contested with them for control and made alliances with them, and ultimately were assimilated within a society that was simultaneously becoming differentiated and stratified. These themes reflect the tensions inherent within the societies and represent the resolution through institutionalisation of those tensions in a stratified model of coastal society.

p.154

In this view the Swahili chronicles, analysed systematically and critically, are valuable sources to study and understand the past culture and events of eastern African coastal people, a distant past chronologically, but still alive in people's memories.

Notes

- [1](#) The flyleaf was added by the consul when he donated the manuscript to the British Museum. It is now kept in the British Library.
- [2](#) Two conceptions of rights and possession of land are here opposed, that of the 'Shirazi', who bought the land through trade, and the original inhabitants, the possessors of the land who give it as a sort of usufruct.
- [3](#) In the twentieth century this name was associated with a ruined city in Somalia near Bur Gao. In some chronicles it is stated that Shirazi came from Shungwaya and not Persia.
- [4](#) Abd al-Malik b. Marwān.
- [5](#) Swahili for Suleymān.
- [6](#) The custom of going to the father-in-law seven days after the marriage is mentioned in the Pate Chronicle as well.
- [7](#) Originally written in Arabic. Some stories of the Kitābare are summarised by Elliot (1925–6).
- [8](#) Among scholars, they are the Galla. Actually the BanūGhaylān are a tribe still found in the Arabian Peninsula.
- [9](#) Al-Aḥsā' in Bahreyn.

References

- Allen, J. de V. 1983. 'Shungwaya, the Mijikenda, and the traditions'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 16 (3): 455–85.
- Allen, J. de V. 1993. *Swahili Origins: Swahili Culture and the Shungwaya Phenomenon*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Baker, E. C. 1941. 'Notes on the Shirazi of East Africa'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 1: 1–10.
- Barros J. de (1777–1778) *Da Asia de J. de Barros e de D. de Couto nova edição offericida a sua magestade D. Maria I. Rainha Fidelissima: Dos Feitos, que os portugueses fizeram mo descobrimento, e conquista dos mares, e terras do Oriente*, 12 Vols. (24 tomes). Lisboa: na Regia Officina Typografica.

- Berg, F. J. 1968. 'The Swahili community of Mombasa 1500–1900'. *Journal of African History* 9 (1): 35–56.
- Burke, P. 1989. 'History as social memory'. In *Memory: History, Culture and the Mind*, edited by T. Butler, 97–113. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Burton, R. 1872. *Zanzibar: City, Island and Coast*, 2 Vols. London: Tinsley.
- Cerulli, E. 1957. *Somalia: Scritti vari editi ed inediti*, 2 Vols. Roma: Ministero degli Affari Esteri.
- Elliot, J. A. G. 1925–1926. 'A visit to the Bajun Islands'. *Journal of the Royal African Society*: 10–22, 147–63, 245–63, 338–58.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1962. *The Medieval History of the Coast of Tanganyika*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Grottanelli, V. L. 1955. *Pescatori dell'Oceano Indiano*. Roma: Cremonese.
- Guillain, M. 1856. *Documents sur l'histoire, la géographie, et le commerce de l'Afrique Orientale*, 3 Vols. Paris: Bertrand.
- Hichens, W. 1938. 'Khabar Lamu: a Chronicle of Lamu'. *Bantu Studies* 12: 1–33.
- Hollis, A. C. 1900. 'Notes on the history of Vumba, East Africa'. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 30: 275–300.
- Ibn Ruzayq 1422/2001. *al-Fath al-mubīn fī sīra al-sāda al-BūSa 'idīn*. Musqat: Wizārat al-Turāth al-Qawmīwa 'l-Thaqāfa.

p.155

- Jewsiewicki, B. and Mudimbe, V. Y. 1993. 'Africans' memories and contemporary history of Africa'. *History and Theory* 32 (4): 1–11.
- Kirkman, J. 1980. 'The Zanzibar Diary of John Studdy Leigh, Part I'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 13 (2): 281–312.
- Knappert, J. 1964. 'The Chronicle of Mombasa'. *Swahili: Journal of the East African Swahili Committee* 34 (1): 21–7.
- Krapf, J. L. 1860. *Travels, Researches and Missionary Labours during Eighteen Years' Residence in Eastern Africa*. London: Trübner and Co.
- LaViolette, A. 2008. 'Swahili cosmopolitanism in Africa and the Indian Ocean world, AD 600–1500'. *Archaeologies* 4 (1): 24–49.
- Morton, R. F. 1972. 'The Shungwaya myth of MijiKenda origins: a problem of late nineteenth-century Kenya coastal history'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 5 (3): 397–423.
- Owen, W. F. W. 1833. *Narrative of Voyages to Explore the Shores of Africa, Arabia and Madagascar*, 2 Vols. London: Bentley.
- Park, J. K. 2012. "'Singwaya was a mere small station": Islamization and ethnic primacy in Digo oral traditions of origin and migration'. *Journal of African Culture Studies* 24 (2): 157–

- Pawlowicz, M. and LaViolette, A. 2013. 'Swahili historical chronicles from an archaeological perspective: bridging history, archaeology, coast, and hinterland in southern Tanzania'. In *The Death of Prehistory*, edited by P. Schmidt and S. Mrozowski, 117–40. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Piggott, D. W. I. 1941. 'Mafia: history and traditions. Collected by Kadhi Amur Omar Saadi (translated by D. W. I. Piggott)'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 12: 23–7.
- Pouwells, R. L. 1984. 'Oral historiography and the Shirazi of the East African coast'. *History in Africa* 11: 237–67.
- Pouwells, R. L. 1987. *Horn and Crescent: Cultural Change and Traditional Islam on the East African Coast, 800–1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rzewuski, E. 1991. 'Origins of the Tungi Sultanate (Northern Mozambique) in the light of local traditions'. In *Unwritten Testimonies of the African Past: Proceeding of the International Symposium Held in Ojrzan-wn Warsaw on 07–08 November 1989*, edited by S. Pitaszewicz and E. Rzewuski, 193–213. Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego (Orientalia Varsovensia).
- Said Bakari bin Sultan 1977. *The Swahili Chronicle of Ngazidja*. Edited by Lyndon Harries. Bloomington: African Studies Program, Indiana University.
- Al-Sālimī, Nūr al-Dīn 'Abdallāh b. Ḥumayyid 1997. *Tuhfat al-A'yān bi-sīrat Ahl 'Umān*. Maktabat al-Istiḳāma: Oman.
- Spear, T. 1982. *Traditions of Origins and Their Interpretation: The Mijikenda of Kenya*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Spear, T. 1984. 'The Shirazi in Swahili traditions, culture, and history'. *History in Africa* 11: 291–305.
- Steere, E. 1870. *Swahili Tales as Told by the Natives of Zanzibar*. London: Bell and Daldy.
- Stigand, C. H. [1913] 1966. *The Land of Zinj: Being an Account of British East Africa, Its Ancient History and Present Inhabitants*. London: Frank Cass & Co.
- Strong, S. A. 1895. 'The history of Kilwa'. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 27: 385–430.
- Tolmacheva, M. 1993. *The Pate Chronicle: Edited and Translated from MSS 177, 321, 344 and 358 of the Library of the University of Dar es Salaam*. African Historical Sources 4. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.
- Vansina, J. 1985. *Oral Tradition as History*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Velten, C. 1907. *Prosa und Poesie der Suaheli*. Berlin: Selbstverlag.
- Walsh, M. 1992. 'Mijikenda origins: a review of the evidence'. *Transafrican Journal of History* 21: 1–18.
- Werner, A. 1915. 'A Swahili history of Pate'. *Journal of the Royal African Society* 14 (54): 148–61, 278–97, 392–413.
- Willis, J. 1993. *Mombasa, the Swahili, and the Making of the Mijikenda*. Oxford: Oxford

University Press.

11

MANDA

Chapurukha M. Kusimba, Sloan R. Williams, Gilbert Oteyo, Janet M. Monge, Kong Cheong and Mohamed Mchulla Mohamed

Introduction

It is now widely accepted that the period between 700 and 1500 CE was the era when Asia was the world (Abu-Lughod 1989, 1991; Gordon 2009). This was a time when the Old World global economic, social, and political order was vested in Buddhist and Islamist states, kingdoms and empires. Interactions were dominated by regions that were connected by the Silk Road commercial complex (Comas *et al.* 1998; Wood 2002; Broadman 2007). Eastern Africa, which for millennia had been embroiled in its own peculiar ways of making a living, was ‘recruited’ into this global network and became a regular partner. Its highly desirable resources included ambergris, aromatic products, iron bloom, gold, ivory, leopard skins and rhinoceros horns among others (Kusimba and Kusimba, this volume). We address eastern Africa’s participation in these transformative early global networks using archaeological data gleaned from the ancient Swahili polity, Manda.

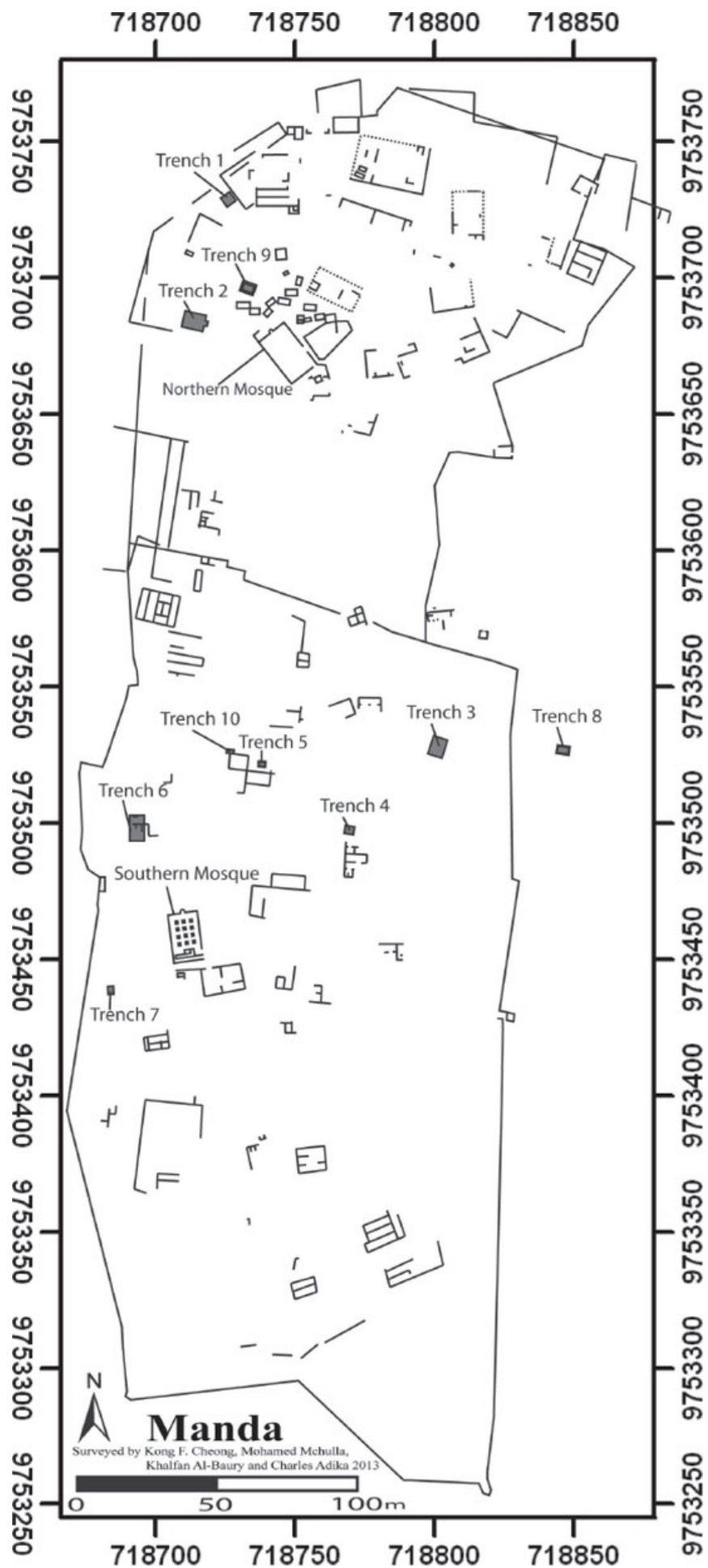
The archaeological site of Manda

The ancient polity of Manda was one of more than a dozen settlements that emerged in the Lamu Archipelago during the period *c.* 600 to 1500 CE (Horton 1996; Wilson 2015; Map 2, p. xxiii). Manda rose to prominence and then precipitously declined from the fifteenth century. Despite repeated attempts to revive its shattered economy, it remained a minor player in relation to its more powerful neighbours, Takwa, Lamu and Pate (Mutoro 1979; Wilson 1982, 2016; Wilson and Omar 1996). The remains of the once-powerful stonetown are scattered over an area about 8 ha in size. Neville Chittick estimated the town at its greatest extent to have ranged between 15 and 25 hectares (Chittick 1984; Horton 1986).

What remains of Manda today are three clearly distinct zones: (1) a northern zone; (2) a southern zone; and (3) the eastern zone ([Figure 11.1](#)). The first two are located within the stonetown's perimeter wall, each hosting its own mosque and cemeteries. The eastern zone located outside the stonetown is represented by pottery scatters but no visible monumental architecture, indicating the strong likelihood that the residences were built of wattle-and-daub that has long disintegrated (Fleisher 2003; LaViolette and Fleisher 2009). Like other urban Swahili settlements, Manda's material culture consists of a rich panoply of materials. A combination of factors, including location, resources and leadership aided Manda's development into a hub for African products that were highly desirable in Persia, Arabia and India (Chittick 1984). An excellent location, including shelter from the open ocean and proximity to the mainland – separated by a shallow channel – permitted and indeed enabled regular interaction between Manda's residents and their neighbours, while simultaneously protecting the town from surprise or unsolicited intrusion and even attacks. Manda's still-standing architecture betrays an earlier experimentation and adoption of stone architecture than became characteristic of elite house forms of the Swahili world (Ghaidan 1976). The precise chronology of the only standing mosque at Manda has not been determined but the style places it in the eleventh century.

p.157

The site was first investigated by Neville Chittick of the British Institute in Eastern Africa (Chittick 1984), who interpreted the remains as evidence for a settlement of immigrants from the Persian Gulf. This was the way he understood much of Swahili civilisation (for example, Chittick 1975), but at Manda he found evidence for extensive links with the Gulf, in the form of trade goods and unique building styles. In particular, a house built of bricks, unique on the coast, was seen to have been built using technologies from a Persian homeland. The ratios of imported ceramics, as high as 30 per cent in one rich beach deposit, also outstripped those at other eastern African sites. Not only was Manda uniquely rich in material culture and building technology, it also peaked early in the Swahili chronology, and thus the large quantities of imports from the seventh century onwards pointed to deep connectivity with Islamic lands among the earliest inhabitants.



Manda remains a unique and fascinating site, yet as Swahili archaeology has moved on, we now know that early trade connections were not unusual for eastern African towns. A major reanalysis of the excavated remains was also conducted by Mark Horton (1986) who concluded that the ratios of imported goods were not as anomalous as might have been first thought. The beach deposit was put into context as a dumping area for ballast, and sherd ratios within the town were within the range of those at other contemporary sites (Priestman, this volume). The buildings were reassessed as belonging to a later period, at which time they fit within a broader tradition of coastal architecture. In sum, the notion of colonial settlement by Persian immigrants was thoroughly debunked.

Our renewed work at Manda has the central aim to re-evaluate its biological and cultural heritage and place the town within a regional and interregional context, as a node from which we can discern the process of integration of eastern Africa into Afrasian commercial networks, and the impacts and influences that derived from this interaction (Toussaint 1966; McPherson 1993; Pearson 1998, 2003; Bose 2009). Geophysical explorations combined with full-coverage survey and mapping by total station have been completed. Two midden context trenches (Trenches 1 and 7) directed at understanding site chronology, one each in the northern and southern urban zones of the site, have been excavated. In addition, seven religious/burial context trenches (Trenches 2–5 and 8–10), one of which may be a domestic context with a burial (Trench 3), directed at assessing the biological profile of Manda's residents, were also excavated: two in the northern zone, four in the southern zone and one outside the town wall in Manda's eastern sector. Multiple laboratory and analytical analyses of artefacts and ecofacts are underway.

Preliminary results from radiocarbon dates and human remains, as well as imported ceramic finds from these excavations, show, as identified by Chittick (1984), activity at the site between the late eighth and late seventeenth centuries CE. In addition, radiocarbon dates cluster into distinct periods: late-eighth–late-tenth centuries; late-thirteenth–late-fourteenth centuries; and the late-fifteenth–mid-seventeenth centuries. Manda exhibits a detailed and internally structured chronological sequence, which fits nicely into the evolution of social complexity in the Swahili world.

The artefacts

Both Chittick's and our excavations show that throughout Manda's existence the polity enjoyed a robust domestic economy and was engaged in local, regional and international trade. The diverse range of artefacts and ecofacts, including local and imported ceramics,

faunal remains, imported glass, metallic items and tools, ostrich egg and marine shell beads, bead-grinders, cores of rock crystals, spindle whorls, loom-weights, coins, imported personal luxury items, decorative bricks, grinding stones and carved items of bone and ivory, among other finds, provide substantial evidence of a polity that was actively engaged in interregional trade, had a vibrant craft industry of bead-making, cloth-making, iron smelting and smithing, and stone cutting and masonry. At the same time, evidence for engagement in maritime trade is visible in all periods. From vessels and vases of porcelain, glass and pottery to glass beads, ornaments including gold, copper and silver rings, bracelets and kohl sticks, this material culture provides strong evidence for contact with diverse regions in the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean and South China sea.

Domestic pottery: production and use

Local pottery is the dominant form of material culture recovered at Swahili sites and Manda is no exception. Manda pottery was made from fine clay tempered with quartz grains, mica, shell or grog. Decorative motifs were applied when the clay was still wet. Virtually all local pottery was hand-modelled and open-fired. Sources of clay remained unchanged for very long periods. However, vessel forms and decoration are dynamic and changed as the town grew into a regional hub and became home to diverse residents.

p.159

Manda local pottery belongs to the Tana Tradition and favourably compares with pottery from other coastal sites (Abungu 1990; Horton 1996; Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2011). All known Tana Tradition complex decorative motifs including line incisions, grooving, and varieties of punctate including point, shell and fingernail are represented at Manda. Vessel forms including S-shaped tweaks, large shoulders, angled bowls, and all sorts of pot bases including, round, flat, and ringed are represented. Features including ribbing, perforation and potter's marks are represented in this collection. Different pottery types are slipped and burnished. Other artefacts including knobs, spouts, handles and lamps point to the complexity of the domestic pottery tradition, the sophistication of the consumer and the importance of the local craft industries on Manda.

Imported pottery: what it tells us about international connections

Non-local pottery imported and used by Manda residents originated from Southwest Asia (Islamic), East Asia (Chinese) and South Asia (Indian). Southwest Asian pottery includes Sasanian Islamic, hatched or scratched and unscratched sgraffiato, Islamic yellow, polychromes including those with blue splash, Islamic black on yellow, and Islamic blue and green monochromes. There is also Islamic unglazed pottery, including the Gudulia type. East Asian ceramics are roughly classified into four types – the celadon, the blue and white, the stoneware and the Chinese white glaze. Pottery of South Asian origin is generally unglazed like local Manda pottery but wheel-thrown.

Islamic pottery occurs in two types: the glazed and the unglazed. The glazed include Sasanian Islamic, hatched or scratched sgraffiato, unscratched sgraffiato and the yellow glaze. Other Islamic glazes include polychromes with blue splash, the black on yellow, the tin glazes and the blue and green monochromes. The scratched sgraffiato, Sasanian Islamic and the unglazed Siraf are similar to those at Ungwana and Shanga (Abungu 1990; Horton 1996). Unscratched sgraffiato falls in Chittick's Period II. Other glaze types, the blue and green monochromes, appear during the late Manda Period. Islamic polychromes with a lustre glaze, manganese purple, mottled ware and various glazes bear witness to the diversity of sources and the varying taste of Manda consumers.

Islamic unglazed pottery includes the Gudulia type ranging from soft creamy white to soft yellowish creamy white bodies that display various decorations of grooves, scrolls, moulded lines and circles and geometric panels of grooved parallel lines. The other common unglazed pottery has red to brick red fabric with rather thick bodies (Chittick 1984: figures 41–46). The bases and handles of this unglazed Islamic pottery are typical (for example, Wilding 1977; Horton 1996), but also point to multiple sources of manufacture in Southwest Asia.

Chinese ceramics at Manda consist of four main types: celadon, blue and white, the white glaze, and the stoneware. The early glazes, particularly the grey green (Yue) and the olive green (Dusun), while uncommon, point to the early commercial connections. Green celadon, usually bowls, is present throughout the six periods, pointing to their popularity and resilience. Both the Chinese blue and white (Qinghua) and white glaze (Qingbai) in this collection occur in the middle to late Manda periods. In sum, commercial contacts with Chinese industrial kilns are present during the entire occupation of Manda.

Indian pottery is well defined by the typological short neck and squat morphology. The bodies are usually thin to medium, except the very thick water jars or pots mostly used on ships. The thick bodies are usually of porous buff fabric while the thin to medium thick bodies are of soft fine reddish or purple grey fabric. Often they have brown or red slip, sometimes on both inside and outside. Some are also decorated with moulds and ridges.

p.160

Glassware

Determining the original colour of glassware is challenging, so we adopted a typological approach that reveals that Manda residents used glass beakers, flasks, flasklets and bowls. The styles and forms were diverse including beakers and bottles with straight, everted and thick rims. The bases of these glass vessels ranged from slightly thickened pinched, normal thickened round base, dimpled and thickened on inside bases, and pinched bottom folded ring bases of beakers. There were also incised and grooved glass, incised and scratched glass, a clearly recognisable phial and lids of bowls.

Stoneware

Calcite sandstones and chlorite schist artefacts abound in all periods. Smooth, often round pebbles recovered were common in graves and tombs suggesting that tombs were often dressed with such pebbles akin to an old Shiite or Jewish ritual of offerings to the dead. Elsewhere, these stones served multiple functions from burnishing stones to slingshots. Highly micaceous stones were utilised for sharpening, pottery temper and perhaps as iron ore. The uses of well-cut blocks and slabs mostly of schist remain 'obscure'. A curved chlorite schist bowl recovered was very likely acquired from Southeast Africa or Madagascar and points to regional trade connections.

Innovation and recycling

A small but diverse assemblage of miscellaneous artefacts of both local and non-local material were modified or recycled to perform certain specific tasks, illustrating the diversity of activities that were carried out at Manda. They include spindle whorls made from local and glazed pottery and chlorite schist, terracotta gaming objects, jade and red calcite material – probably raw material for bead-making – a seed pod, a stone flake awl and bone/shell materials modified as personal body adornments. A variety of bead grinders were made from *Porites* coral. A combined tool of schist rock first used as a grinding stone upper quern and later recycled as a bead grinder points to the diversity of crafts that were carried out in Manda households.

Discussion and conclusions

Our ongoing interdisciplinary and integrated collaborative research at Manda advances our anthropological understanding of the role and importance of commerce in cultural transmission. The re-excavation of Manda provides us with the unique opportunity to contribute to the ongoing re-evaluation of eastern Africa's biological and cultural heritage that has relevance for many other regions of the world. We hope by this restudy to illuminate the integral role that local, regional and extra-regional agency played in the development of Swahili society.

The diversity of material artefacts from Manda indicates that ancient trade between eastern Africa and Asia was a complex affair that involved diverse communities. On the one hand, Africa's commodities were in high demand in Asia. On the other hand, Africans were interested in cloth (silk and cotton), ceramics and beads among other imports. Consumption of African and Asian products was bidirectional, involved diverse communities whose ways of life from technology, culture and economics are visible in the cultural affinities of Afrasian peoples from North Africa through Central Asia.

The growth of settlements like Manda, Pate and Kilwa provides testimony not only to the expansion of maritime trade and the growing economic and political power, but also to inter-regional competition and the development of valued overseas markets (Carswell and Prickett 1984; Oka 2008; Oka *et al.* 2009). The consumption of Chinese ceramics and silks, Indo-Pacific beads, pottery, cloth, jewellery, foodstuffs and Islamic pottery by eastern Africans was primarily through the agency of Arab, Persian, Hindu and Muslim Indian merchants. The arrival of significant quantities of white wares made in Fujian (mainly Ding, Qingbai and moulded white wares), the use of Chinese and Indian coins, the close similarity of Chinese green wares recovered at ports like Homs (Syria), Chaul (India), Shanga, Manda and Mtwapa (Kenya), Kilwa and Songo Mnara (Tanzania), Chibuene (Mozambique) and Great Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe) points to the major advances that China had made in mass-production technology and which, though indirect, linked the two regions through global commercial networks (Horton 1996: 418; Oka *et al.* 2009). The sheer complexity and diversity of material culture at Manda alongside the distribution of trade ceramics suggests that, by the eleventh and twelfth centuries ce, parts of the Swahili coast were linked into shared systems of value and prestige. While the temptation to view evidence from Manda and other contemporary settlements, Shanga and Kilwa, as belonging to a larger Islamic elite network, including ‘sultans’ with cosmopolitan tastes and preferences for prestige goods shared with fellow elites in Asia and the Mediterranean, has sometimes been great, the fact that more than 90 per cent of archaeological assemblages of the Swahili world, including those at Manda, is locally made tell us that these societies were integrally and distinctively African.

Acknowledgements

Chapurukha M. Kusimba’s research in Kenya has been generously supported by the National Museums of Kenya and the Republic of Kenya through research permits and excavation permits: 0P/13/001/25C 86; MHE & T 13/001/35C264 and NCST/5/C/002/E/543. The research reported here was generously supported by a grant from the US National Endowment for the Humanities (2012–14), to Sloan Williams and Chapurukha Kusimba. We thank Dr Idle Farah, Dr Purity Kiura, Dr Mzalendo Kibunjia, Athman Lali and the Mchulla family in Mombasa, Lamu and Faza. Fuzz and Bimbi Dyer of Manda Bay’s interest in the history of Manda and their efforts in working with the National Museums of Kenya to protect the built environment of Manda has ensured the continued protection of the site over the years. We dedicate this chapter to them and to the villagers of Manda.

References

- Abu-Lughod, J. L. 1989. *Before European Hegemony: The World System ad 1250–1350*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Abu-Lughod, J. L. 1991. 'The World System in the thirteenth century: dead-end or precursor? Essay in global and comparative history'. *American Historical Association*, 184–95.
- Abungu, G. H. O. 1990. 'Communities on the River Tana, Kenya: an archaeological study of relations between the delta and the river basin, 700–1890 AD'. PhD diss., Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge.
- Bose, S. 2009. *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Broadman, H. G. 2007. *Africa's Silk Road*. Washington: The World Bank.

p.162

- Carswell, J. and Prickett, M. 1984. 'Mantai 1980: a preliminary investigation'. *Ancient Ceylon* 5: 11–80.
- Chittick, H. N. 1975. 'The peopling of the East African coast'. In *East Africa and the Orient: Cultural Syntheses in Pre-colonial Times*, edited by H. N. Chittick and R. I. Rotberg, 16–143. New York: Africana Publishing.
- Chittick, H. N. 1984. *Manda: Excavations at an Island Port on the Kenya Coast*. Memoir 9. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Comas, D., Calafell, F., Mateu, E., Pérez-Lezaun, A., Bosch, E., Martínez-Arias, R., *et al.* 1998. 'Trading genes along the Silk Road: mtDNA sequences and the origin of Central Asian populations'. *The American Journal of Human Genetics* 63 (6): 1824–38.
- Fleisher, J. B. 2003. 'Viewing stonetowns from the countryside: an archaeological approach to Swahili regions, AD 800–1500'. PhD diss., Department of Anthropology, University of Virginia.
- Fleisher, J. B. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2011. 'Ceramics and the early Swahili: deconstructing the Early Tana Tradition'. *African Archaeological Review* 28 (4): 245–78.
- Ghaidan, U. 1976. *Lamu: A Study in Conservation*. Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau.
- Gordon, S. 2009. *When Asia Was the World*. Minneapolis: Da Capo Press.
- Horton, M. C. 1986 'Asiatic colonization of the East African coast: the Manda evidence'. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2: 201–13.
- Horton, M. C. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. Memoir 14. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- LaViolette, A. and Fleisher, J. 2009. 'The urban history of a rural place: Swahili archaeology on Pemba Island, Tanzania, 700–1500 AD'. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 42 (3): 433–55.
- McPherson, K. 1993. *The Indian Ocean: A History of People and the Sea*. New York: Oxford

University Press.

- Mutoro, H. W. 1979. 'A contribution to the study of cultural and economic dynamics of historical settlements of the East African coast with particular reference to the Ruins of Takwa'. MA thesis, University of Nairobi.
- Oka, R. 2008. 'Resilience and adaptation of trade networks in East African and South Asian port polities, 1500–1800 CE'. PhD diss., University of Illinois at Chicago.
- Oka, R., Kusimba, C. M. and Gogte, V. D. 2009. 'Where others fear to trade: modeling adaptive resilience in ethnic trading networks to famines, maritime warfare and imperial stability in the growing Indian Ocean economy, ca. 1500–1700 CE'. In *The Political Economy of Hazards and Disasters*, edited by E. C. Jones and A. D. Murphy, 201–40. Lanham: AltaMira Press.
- Oka, R., Dussubieux, L., Kusimba, C. M. and Gogte, V. D. 2010. 'The impact of imitation ceramic industries and internal political restrictions on Chinese commercial ceramic exports in the Indian Ocean maritime exchange'. In *Scientific Research on Historic Asian Ceramics: Proceedings of the 4th Forbes Symposium at the Freer Gallery of Art*, edited by B. McCarthy and P. Jett, 175–85. Washington: Smithsonian Institution and Archetype Books.
- Pearson, M. N. 1998. *Port Cities and Intruders: The Swahili Coast, India, and Portugal in the Early Modern Era*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Pearson, M. N. 2003. *The Indian Ocean*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Toussaint, A. 1966. *History of the Indian Ocean*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wilding, R. F. 1977. 'The ceramics of the Lamu Archipelago'. PhD diss., Nairobi: University of Nairobi.
- Wilson, T. H. 1982. 'Spatial analysis and settlement patterns on the East African coast'. *Paideuma*: 201–19.
- Wilson, T. H. 2015. *Swahili Monumental Architecture and Archaeology North of the Tana River*, 2nd Ed. Nairobi: National Museums of Kenya.
- Wilson, T. H. and Omar, A. L. 1996. 'Preservation of cultural heritage on the East African coast'. In *Plundering Africa's Past*, edited by P. R. Schmidt and R. McIntosh, 225–49. Gainesville: University of Florida Press.
- Wood, F. 2002. *The Silk Road: Two Thousand Years in the Heart of Asia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

12

TUMBE, KIMIMBA AND BANDARIKUU

Jeffrey Fleisher

Introduction

Here I describe research and findings from three first-millennium sites in northern Pemba Island, Tanzania. Each has well-preserved contexts marked by assemblages of Early Tana Tradition (ETT) pottery and related artefacts that date from the seventh to mid-tenth century CE. Despite their similarities in material culture, the sites are different in size and degree of their interaction with the Indian Ocean trade system. At one end of the spectrum is Tumbe, a large settlement with high densities of imported ceramics, glass and metals and, at the other, is Kimimba, a small village site with only a handful of imported artefacts despite its large local assemblage. The diversity among the three in a small region in which they probably interacted often offers key insights into first-millennium regional networks: island and coastal settlements had variable engagements with overseas trade networks, populations at sites like Tumbe may have asserted some degree of control over the importation and flow of goods regionally, and some degree of ranking may have characterised early settlement systems.

Background and setting

Tumbe, Bandarikuu and Kimimba (Map 3, p. xxiv) were found during a series of excavation and survey projects in the northern part of Pemba Island in the late 1990s and early 2000s; the projects revealed settlement patterns leading up to, and contemporary with, the establishment of Swahili stonetowns on the island (Fleisher 2003). The two largest towns in northern Pemba were Chwaka (in the east) and Mkia wa Ngombe (in the west), both first settled in the eleventh century and abandoned by the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. Archaeological research at Chwaka began in 1997 and continued for a total of four additional seasons (LaViolette 2008; LaViolette and Fleisher 2009; Fleisher

and LaViolette 2013; LaViolette, this volume). Mkia wa Ngombe has only been subject to test excavations, in the mid-1980s (Horton and Clark 1985) and again in 1999–2000 (Fleisher 2003). These two sites served as the anchors for archaeological survey and excavation carried out in 1999–2000, a project that sought to document rural and non-stone settlements in periods prior to and contemporary with the initial settlement of the island in the seventh century CE. The results of that research are described elsewhere (Fleisher 2003, 2010). In brief, the research documented shifting settlement patterns from the seventh to fifteenth centuries: extensive settlement across the island from 700 to 950 CE gave way to more concentrated settlement in stonetowns, what I have referred to as a synoecism, urban development through the movement of countryside populations into nascent towns.

p.164

An aspect that unites these first-millennium sites is that they contain components that are spatially and stratigraphically distinct from later ones. These components are buried 50–60 cm below the surface, under well-drained, sandy soils. Cultural deposits at these sites are thus mostly undisturbed from contemporary farming or erosion; there is little to no mixing with later occupations, a common issue at Swahili sites with multi-century occupations. This has allowed for the discovery of well-preserved, collapsed earthen house remains (Tumbe) and other intact features such as pits and post holes, along with thousands of artefacts including local and imported pottery, metals, glass and daub fragments.

Tumbe

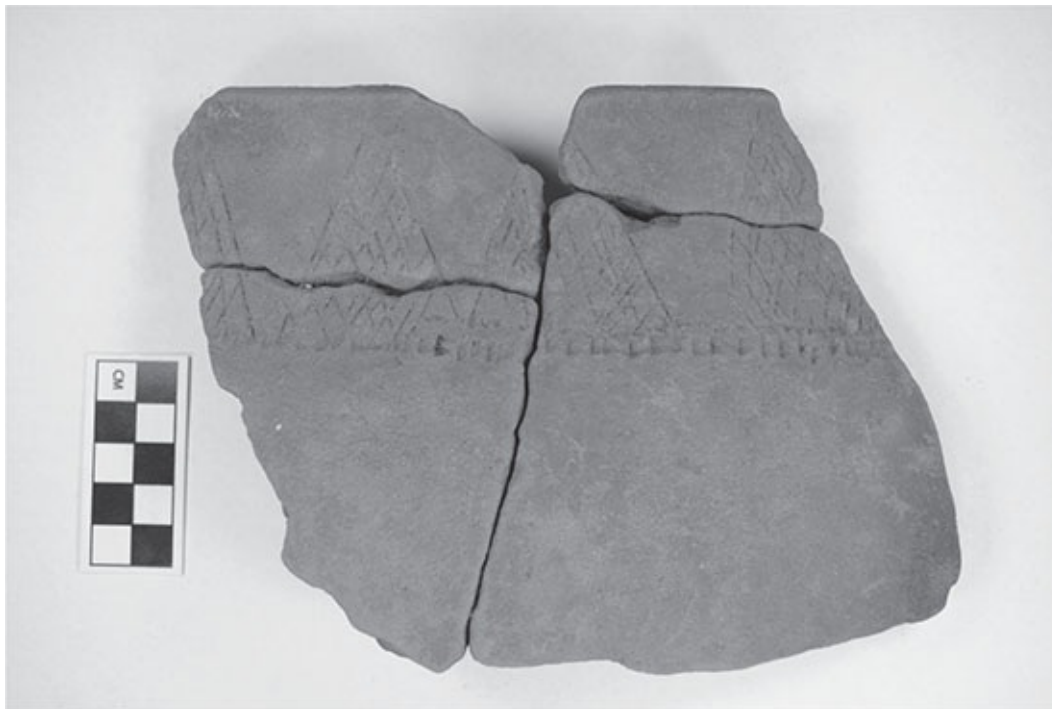
Located on the northeastern shore of Micheweni Bay, Tumbe covers more than 20 hectares, stretching patchily along 600 metres of coast and extending 600 metres inland. The site is directly northwest of Chwaka, which it predates but is not stratigraphically related to. The site was discovered in 1993 on a site visit to Chwaka, when ETT ceramics were noted in a new road cut (LaViolette and Fleisher 1995). Survey and shovel-test pits were carried out over the site in 1998, revealing the extent of the settlement. Between 1998 and 2004, 23 test units covering almost 80 sq. metres and four larger exposures (Operations 3, 4, 13, 14) covering an additional 97 sq. metres were excavated.

Direct dating of millet from Tumbe has shown that the site was occupied by the seventh century CE (Walshaw 2010, 2015). Most radiocarbon dates from excavations, however, indicate that the site was primarily occupied from the late eighth to mid-tenth centuries (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013). Radiocarbon dates from two well-sealed and burned earthen houses all returned calibrated dates of 770–980 CE (2 σ).

Excavations at Tumbe have offered four key findings: the earliest presence of rice grains

on the coast (Walshaw 2010); an ETT ceramic assemblage that links it to other large sites, such as Unguja Ukuu ([Figure 12.1](#)) (Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2011); the remains of two burned earthen houses that have revealed much about activities of everyday life (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013); and a massive assemblage of bead grinders and metal objects ([Figure 12.2](#)) offering insight into production activities at an early coastal site (Flexner *et al.* 2008). Such insights suggest that Tumbe was a large, complex village settlement, particularly well-connected to other coastal settlements as well as overseas traders from the Persian Gulf. Large numbers of Sasanian Islamic and Siraf storage jars in the house assemblages are part of an imported pottery assemblage with few peers at other coastal sites (Priestman, this volume). The level of shell-bead production indicated by over 3,600 bead grinders from the site suggests production beyond local needs, and may offer evidence of specialised production for trade. Despite the intensification of trade and production, there is little evidence that such activities were converted into hierarchical relationships: residents lived in roughly similar earthen houses, carried out a range of household production activities, and practised subsistence indistinguishable from people in less well-connected surrounding villages. As Fleisher and LaViolette (2013: 1166) note, ‘they flourished for centuries balanced between engagement in a domestic economy and a long-distance one’.

p.165



[Figure 12.1](#) Early Tana Tradition ceramics from Tumbe



[*Figure 12.2*](#) Copper ring with incised design similar to Tana Tradition ceramics

Kimimba

Kimimba is a 1.75 ha site with a single, first-millennium occupation. It was located in 1999 through shovel-test pits that accompanied archaeological survey (Fleisher 2003, 2010), and showed no visible surface material. Additional shovel-test pits and test units were excavated to delineate site boundaries. A total of 17 units – or 106 sq. metres – were excavated in 2002 and 2006. As such, this is one of the most extensively excavated ETT sites of its size on the eastern African coast. Ceramic evidence dates Kimimba broadly to the seventh–tenth centuries. Radiocarbon dating of charcoal offers less conclusive results, with three dates of radically different ranges (cal 60–230 CE; cal 340–540 CE; cal 650–780 CE). The homogeneous material culture suggests that the most appropriate of these three is the latest, indicating that Kimimba was inhabited during the earlier part of neighbouring Tumbe’s occupation.

p.166

Kimimba’s material culture assemblage is dominated by local pottery and daub, indicating midden areas and possible collapsed earthen houses. The site contained few imported ceramics, only 14 sherds compared with 7772 local sherds. The rarity of imports is striking given the richness of the imported material assemblage found just two kilometres away at Tumbe (close to 2000 sherds of imported pottery excavated at Tumbe from just less than twice the area of Kimimba). The imported pottery at Kimimba was mostly small fragments, with the entire assemblage weighing just 30 grams. One sherd, of

rare Chinese Dusun stoneware, seems to have been ground into a triangle – perhaps indicating that the restricted distribution of imported pottery from large villages like Tumbe might have been limited to *fragments* of imported pottery. Yet, imported glass vessels seem to have been more accessible to Kimimba's residents. High densities of glass vessel fragments were located in a few units. Unit KM2's artefact assemblage represents at least four different vessels: two beakers and two bottles.

Excavations at Kimimba probably reveal a typical coastal village settlement from this period. There is ample evidence of earthen housing, with large amounts of daub found in midden deposits. Evidence of local production, in the form of iron-smithing slag and bead grinders, suggests production was carried out at the household level. Although the scale of production differs substantially between Kimimba and Tumbe, the location of production might have been the same. Analysis of the ETT ceramics (Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2011) suggests that the residents of Kimimba participated in regional stylistic spheres for pottery production, with decorative motifs similar to neighbouring Tumbe and village settlements further south on the eastern African coast. Yet, the assemblage comprised smaller percentages of bowls than sites like Tumbe and other larger coastal settlements. This may suggest that certain forms of consumption available to residents of sites like Tumbe or Bandarikuu may not have been practised at Kimimba.

Bandarikuu

Bandarikuu ('large harbour') sits on the western side of Pemba, on a peninsula jutting into an inlet protected from Pemba Channel by Njao Island. As with Kimimba, it was located in 1999 through transect survey with shovel-tests (Fleisher 2003), and site boundaries were established through additional test pits. There were no surface indications for the site. Bandarikuu contains multiple components from the eighth to fourteenth centuries, but the main deposits seem to date from the eighth to eleventh centuries CE; only small amounts of twelfth- to fourteenth-century materials were found at the western edge of the peninsula. As at Tumbe, these components are adjacent rather than stratified: eighth–ninth-century deposits to the east, tenth–eleventh-century to the west. Together the components cover approximately 11 ha; but neither component likely exceeded 6 ha at any one time. A radiocarbon sample from the main cultural layer in the eastern component provided a date of cal 710–890 CE; one from the western component returned a date of cal 1390–1530 CE (this appears a bit late for the materials in this component).

Four units were excavated: BK 1 and BK 4 were located in the eighth- to ninth-century deposits, and BK 2 and BK 3 were in areas with later materials, dating to the tenth to fourteenth centuries. These revealed deposits dense with local pottery, a full range of imports (pottery, glass, metals), and other local materials (spindle whorls, iron slag and bead grinders). Imported pottery in BK 1 and BK 4 included Sasanian Islamic jars and

white glaze bowls, while imports in BK 2 and BK 3 were limited to hatched and other types of sgraffiato.

p.167

Bandarikuu was a moderately sized village throughout its occupation, somewhat larger than Kimimba but much smaller than Tumbe. The material assemblage indicates that its inhabitants engaged in similar types of activities as those living in other contemporary sites on Pemba: they lived in earth-and-thatch houses, made metal tools and shell beads, and used imported pottery, glass and metals. In the eighth–ninth centuries the evidence suggests that inhabitants had only limited access to overseas trade, with only 17 imported sherds from these centuries, and 13 from the tenth–eleventh-century ones. Notably, no sherds of Siraf storage jars were found at Bandarikuu, though they were relatively common at contemporary Tumbe.

The site contains a very rich local pottery assemblage, with over 7,500 sherds excavated. Ceramics of the eighth and ninth centuries offer two key insights. First, the decorative elements on necked jars found at Bandarikuu are more closely associated with assemblages further north in the Lamu Archipelago than with roughly contemporary sites on Pemba (for example, Tumbe and Kimimba); there were smaller percentages of filled standing triangles, the most common element on ETT sites on Pemba and those further south in Tanzania. Second, although the assemblage's decorative elements differed from those at Tumbe, it showed many similarities in the morphological variation of vessels. Bandarikuu contained a number of bowls that matched Tumbe, but exceeded Kimimba. Fleisher and Wynne-Jones (2011: 274–5) have argued that one reason for this 'may have to do with differing consumption patterns and connections to Indian Ocean trade at these different types of sites . . . [a]s used in practice, they may indicate forms of consumption of nascent elites'.

Ceramics from the later component at Bandarikuu, post-dating 950 CE, offer a robust assemblage of graphited red-slip ware, a common type on the western side of Pemba (at Mtwambwe Mkuu) as well as at far-flung locations like Sharma on the Yemeni coast (Rougeulle 2004). These materials have close associations with the Comoro Islands, where they form a substantial part of the ceramic assemblages (Wright 1984). These ceramics represent a wide range of forms, but the most common is a large, deep red painted/burnished bowl with graphite at the rim and on the interior (Fleisher 2003: 248–250).

Conclusion

These three sites represent an important range of variation for first-millennium villages on the eastern African coast, from small (Kimimba) to medium (Bandarikuu) to large and

complex (Tumbe). A comparison of the material assemblages demonstrates the variable ways that coastal villagers were involved (or not) in long-distance trade – it may be that large villages like Tumbe were able to manage the flow of goods on and off the island. It is noteworthy, however, that the intensity of overseas connections did not result in radical transformation of the activities of daily life – while the material assemblages differed in the quantities of imported goods available to residents of the sites, they were similar in most other material classes. We can also see how connections and networks between coastal settlements might have extended in unexpected ways – the distinctions between east and west Pemban ETT materials hint at the variable connections that occurred along the coastal corridor. Research at such sites suggests there is much still to learn about first-millennium life on the coast, a period that is often regarded only as nascent to the stonetowns that would emerge in later centuries (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013).

p.168

References

- Fleisher, J. B. 2003. 'Viewing stonetowns from the countryside: an archaeological approach to Swahili regional systems, AD 800–1500'. PhD thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Virginia.
- Fleisher, J. B. 2010. 'Swahili synoecism: rural settlements and town formation on the central East African coast, AD 750–1500'. *Journal of Field Archaeology* 35: 265–82.
- Fleisher, J. B. and LaViolette, A. 2013. 'The early Swahili trade village of Tumbe, Pemba Island, Tanzania, AD 600–950'. *Antiquity* 87 (338): 1151–68.
- Fleisher, J. B. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2011. 'Ceramics and the early Swahili: deconstructing the Early Tana Tradition'. *African Archaeological Review* 28 (4): 245–78.
- Flexner, J. L., Fleisher, J. B. and LaViolette, A. 2008. 'Bead grinders and early Swahili household economy: analysis of an assemblage from Tumbe, Pemba Island, Tanzania, 7th–10th centuries AD'. *Journal of African Archaeology* 6 (2): 161–81.
- Horton, M. C. and Clarke, C. M. 1985. *The Zanzibar Archaeological Survey*. Zanzibar: Ministry of Information, Culture and Sports.
- LaViolette, A. 2008. 'Swahili cosmopolitanism in Africa and the Indian Ocean world, AD 600–1500'. *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress* 1: 24–49.
- LaViolette, A. and Fleisher, J. B. 1995. 'Reconnaissance of sites bearing Triangular-Incised (Tana Tradition) Ware on Pemba Island, Tanzania'. *Nyame Akuma* 44: 59–65.
- LaViolette, A. and Fleisher, J. B. 2009. 'The urban history of a rural place: Swahili archaeology on Pemba Island, Tanzania, 700–1500 AD'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 42 (3): 433–55.
- Rougeulle, A. 2004. 'Le Yémen entre Orient et Afrique: Sharma, un entrepôt du

- commerce médiéval sur la côte sud de l'Arabie'. *Annales Islamologiques* 38: 201–53.
- Walshaw, S. C. 2010. 'Converting to rice: urbanization, Islamization and crops on Pemba Island, Tanzania, AD 700–1500'. *World Archaeology* 42 (1): 137–54.
- Walshaw, S. C. 2015. *Swahili Urbanization, Trade, and Food Production: Botanical Perspectives from Pemba Island, Tanzania ad 600–1500*. Oxford: Archeopress.
- Wright, H. T. 1984. 'Early seafarers of the Comoro Islands: the Dembeni Phase of the IXth–Xth centuries AD'. *Azania* 19: 13–59.

13

UNGUJA UKUU

Abdurahman Juma

Unguja Ukuu is located on a small peninsula in the mid-southern part of the island of Unguja, commonly known as Zanzibar (Fitton, this volume). The site borders the sandy seashore to the west and south; a creek lined with mangrove trees lies to the east (Map 3, p. xxiv). On the landward northern side, which today is traversed by the motor road linking to the island network, lies a predominantly coral rag landscape. The beach is sheltered in a small bay with coral islets, providing a perfect early-type anchorage for the site, for communication with the nearby mainland coast and wider Indian Ocean interactions.

The toponym Unguja Ukuu means literally ‘Great Unguja’ and suggests the importance of this site in a regional context (Priestman, this volume). The site is one of very few mentioned in early histories of the coast. For example, the Arabic *Book of Curiosities*, compiled in Egypt c. 1020–1050 CE, contains a map showing the coasts of the Indian Ocean from China to eastern Africa. Among the key islands shown are ‘Qanbalu’ and ‘Unjuwa’ (Unguja). The latter island ‘has a town called Ukuh’ (Edson and Savage-Smith 2004: MS. Arab. c. 90, fols. 29b–30a).

Chittick (1966) visited Unguja Ukuu and formally reported the old site where a local farmer had fortuitously found an eighth-century Abbasid dinar in 1866 (Pearce 1920). In the 1980s Horton directed test-pit surveys of the site with the support of the British Institute in Eastern Africa. The site coverage was found to be about 16 ha, estimated on the basis of surface remains. Imported ceramics from the Islamic world and China (Zhao and Qin, this volume) were used to suggest an initial occupation from the eighth century CE, with later phases of occupation during the eleventh century and c. 1450–1600 CE (Clark and Horton 1985).

More detailed investigations were carried out under the Urban Origins project supported by the Government of Sweden (Juma 2004). The investigations confirmed the lateral extent of the site, using resistivity survey to explore areas of below-ground remains.

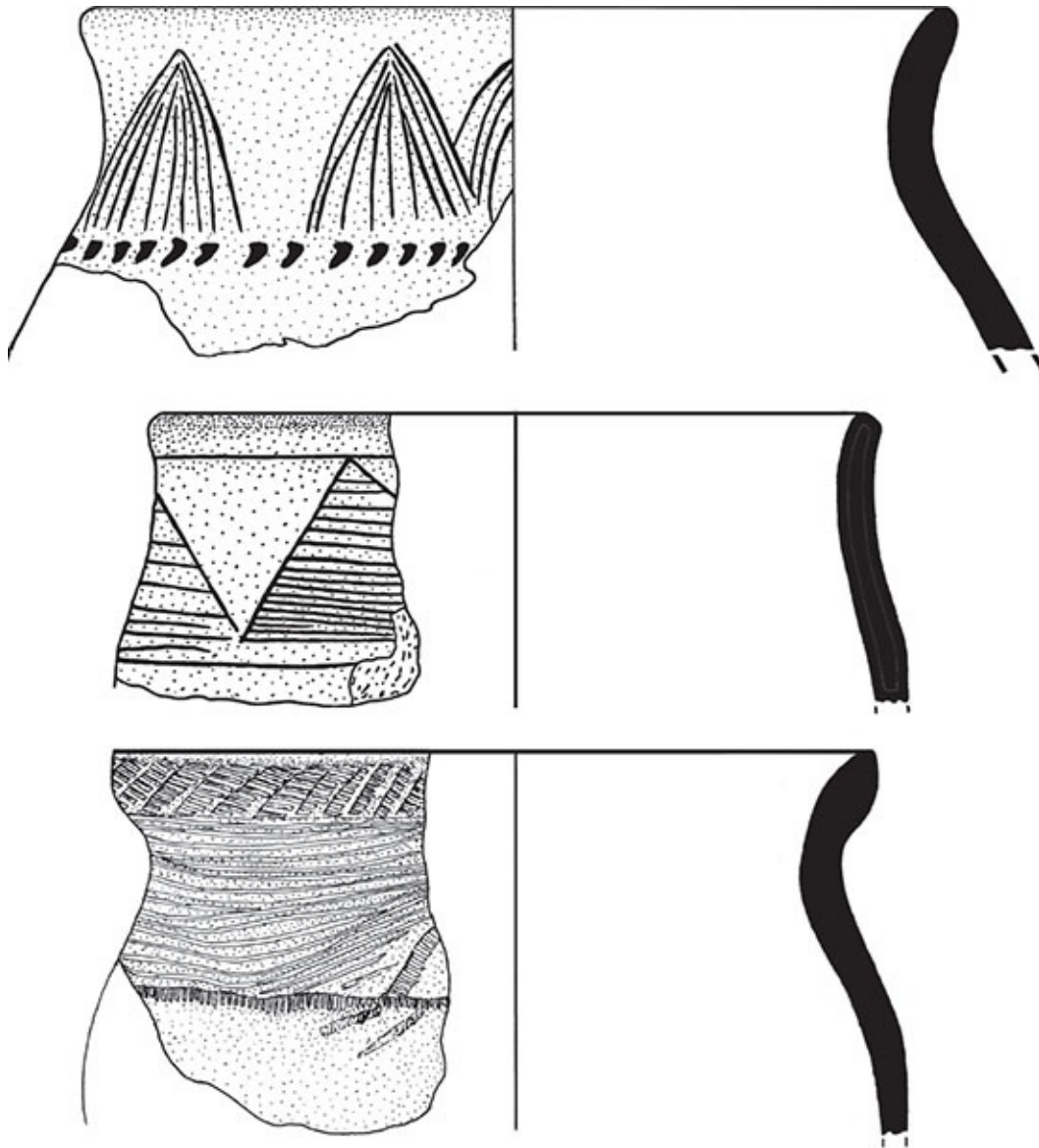
The chronology suggested by Clark and Horton (1985) was refined for the earliest levels, with first occupation from *c.* 500 CE. The primary phase of occupation, *c.* 500–1000 CE, was the main focus of excavations at the site, and is the focus of this chapter.

Methodology

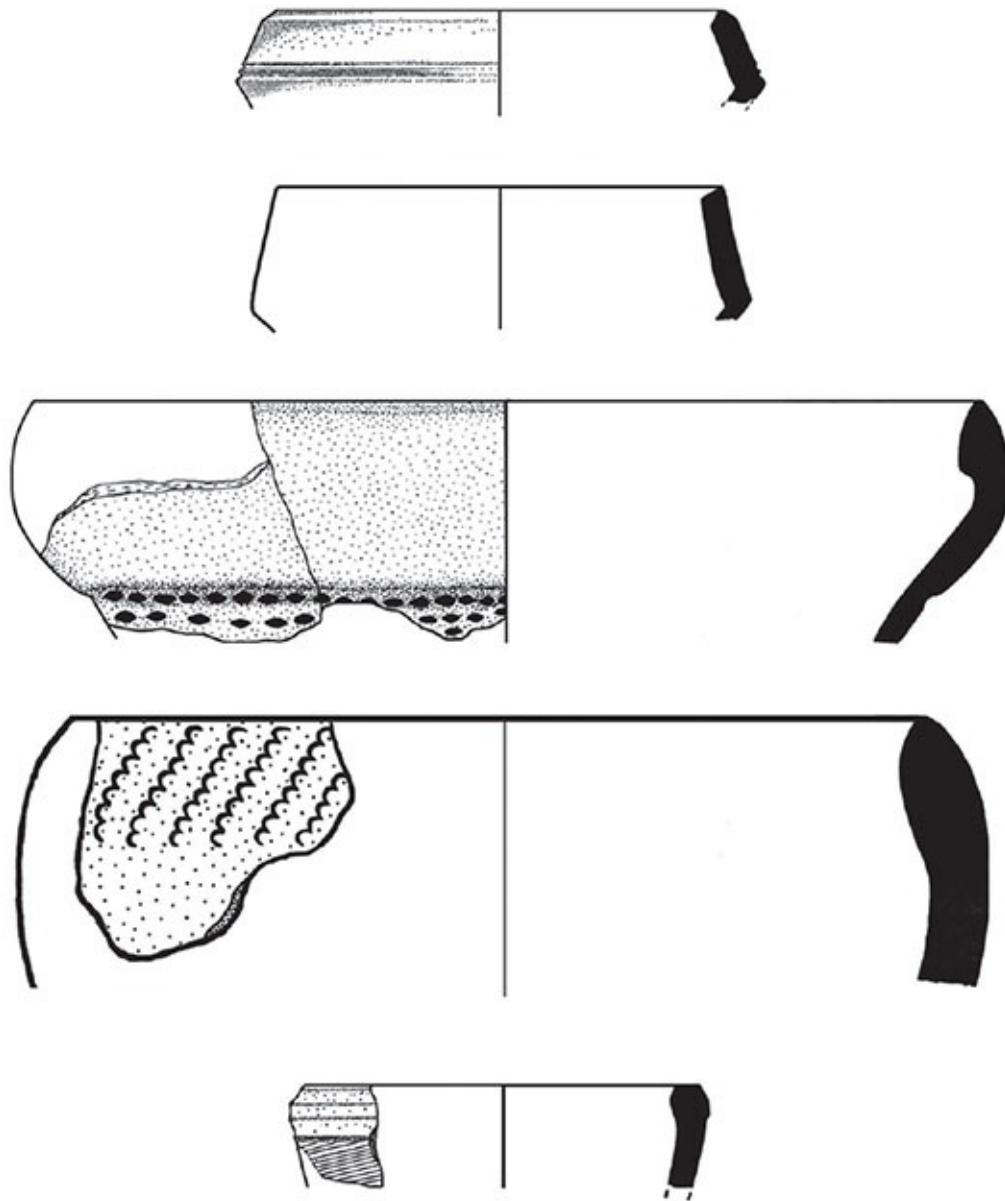
Surface and resistivity surveys across Unguja Ukuu provided information on the relative density and depth of remains, and acted as a guide to areas to be excavated. These were chosen to represent all occupation periods of the site, and to ascertain the chronology and functional characteristics of the site. Five stratigraphic units (A, B, J, K and L) were examined, while others were shallow-area excavations done to retrieve examples of ground-plans of later periods of occupation. A wide variety of artefacts were recovered and a wealth of features, including: earthen floors, hearths, deep refuse pits of long use and rich in cultural materials, burials in two places, and postholes indicating the presence of earthen structures in almost all levels.

p.170

Ceramics



[Figure 13.1](#) Local pottery, deep S-shaped vessels. Numbering from the top: (1) Grey surface, red fabric, red core, fine fabric, TH 9 mm, RTH 10 mm, RD 200 mm; (2) Grey surface, dark-reddish brown core, fine fabric, TH 9–10 mm, RTH 8 mm, RD 190 mm; (3) Red surface and core, fine fabric, TH 10 mm, RTH 12 mm, RD 180 mm



[Figure 13.2](#) Local pottery, bowls. Numbering from the top: (1) Pale brown surface and fabric, RTH 8–9 mm, RD 8–9 mm; (2) Pale brown slipped surface, graphited on rim TH 10 mm, RTH 10 mm, RD 120 mm; (3) Dark grey graphited surface, TH 10 mm, RD 260 mm; (4) Dark grey compact fabric, TH 9–13mm, RD 150 mm; (5) Dark brown fabric TH 9 mm, RTH 14 mm, RD 140 mm

Local and imported pottery types were present in all levels. Locally produced ceramics were far more abundant, but imports were numerous and suggest the importance of oceanic trade from the first occupation. The dominant type of local pottery consists of S-shaped utility vessels for deep cooking, generally identified as ETT/TIW, frequently carrying incised or impressed decorations ([Figure 13.1](#)). Relatively fine, open bowls used for special cooking and commonly burnished or painted with graphite, haematite or red slip were found in association with the S-shaped Tana tradition jars ([Figure 13.2](#)). They include early examples with graphite burnishing and shell impressions on their thickened rims

([Figure 13.2](#), No. 4). Bowls with thickened and fluted rims similar to earlier Kwale tradition pottery were noted from a couple of fragments ([Figure 13.2](#), No. 5). The variety of ceramics within the contemporary assemblage was typical of coastal sites of this period and suggests a range of different consumption activities (Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2011). Links with contemporary sites on the coast and interior are clearly demonstrated by the similarities of this assemblage to others at inland sites.

Quite a few imported pottery types were observed in the early phase of the site. The commonest is the glossy turquoise-glazed monochrome ware with a bluish tinge from Persia, which prevailed to the end of the primary occupation. Other fragments from Persia consist of unglazed buff wares. There are a small number of fragments of Chinese stoneware. Uncommon fragments of interesting unglazed vessels were found, such as *handlo*-shaped pottery from India and others from the southern Mediterranean, recognised to be of the late Roman period (Juma 1996). All of these suggest a range and quantity of connection with the Indian Ocean world that was uncommon on the coast at this time (Priestman, Beaujard, this volume).

Among other significant discoveries from the site is a greenish grey fragment of rare soapstone bowl with engraved decoration consisting of double-incised circles and a dot at the centre.

Glass vessels present in the early phase are mostly fragmented and have suffered from deterioration. Most popular during this period are colourless and light green glass vessels. A few pieces from high-quality glass vessels were observed. Their basic decorations generally consist of mouldings, loops or spiral trails and threads, in relief typical of the fifth–sixth-century vessels known in north-western Europe. These vessels are possibly products from the Mediterranean trade with the Indian Ocean. One example of such fragments ([Figure 13.3](#)) comes from a dark green glass vessel decorated with horizontal threads that are wound around the body, reflecting a Byzantine style of decorating glass vessels.



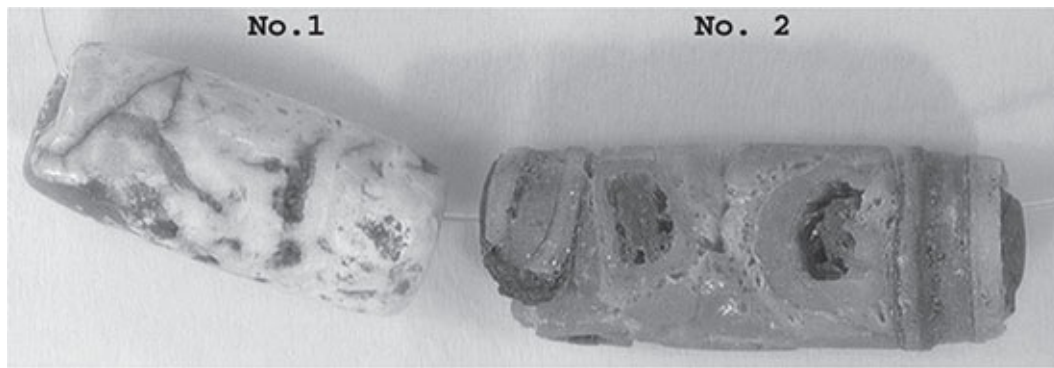
[Figure 13.3](#) Imported glass vessel with loop decoration, perhaps a bell beaker, dark green, TH 3.5 mm

Beads

The beads comprise local types produced from marine shells, and imported varieties made mostly of glass. The production of marine-shell beads on-site is indicated by the large quantities of grooved potsherds thought to have been bead grinders (Flexner *et al.* 2008; LaViolette, Craft, this volume). Imported sherds of plain buff fabric were favoured for this, although sandstone examples are also found.

Among the imported beads, bluish-green glass beads are more prevalent than the light green variety from the early period (see Woods, this volume, for comparable types). Rare decorative glass beads include an eyed bead ([Figure 13.4](#), No. 2), a diagnostic wound polychrome bead with mosaic pattern colours, and several other varieties.

There are also rare examples of semi-precious stone beads, including agate and etched carnelian tubular beads ([Figure 13.4](#), No. 1). These suggest early contacts with India – probably Gujarat – where the stone-bead industry was important both for export and internal consumption (Hawkes and Wynne-Jones 2015).



[*Figure 13.4*](#) Imported glass beads. (1) Etched carnelian bead. (2) Cylindrical-eyed bead with mosaic colours.

p.173

Metals

Metallic objects are mostly deteriorated although well-represented in the early levels. Iron objects (about 4 kg/m³) include arrowheads, hollow pipes, nails and pin-like objects. The site yielded significant quantities of iron slag, with an average 5kg/m³. This suggests the working of iron in and around the domestic areas of the site as part of a household industry. Non-ferrous objects (about 7 kg/m³) include solid bracelets, earrings, a necklace, nail, chest key, hook and chain.

Subsistence

Remains of fauna in the early sequence of the site include bones of undomesticated forest animals, namely elephant whose presence is unknown in the Zanzibar Archipelago, and leopard known to be present there until the twentieth century (Walsh, this volume). Other types of fauna, domesticated and non-domesticated, include cattle, goat, chicken, dog, cat, monkey, bush baby or galago, bovid, suni and dik-dik (small antelopes), tree hyrax, giant rat, a variety of birds and marine animals including dugong, pygmy whale, turtle, crab, gastropods and various types of coral and open-water fish. This suggests a broad subsistence economy of farming, fishing and hunting of wild fauna (Quintana Morales and Prendergast, this volume).

Chronology

Chronology of the site is based on the radiocarbon results, the dating of imported pottery

and other diagnostic objects. Results of aggregated radiocarbon dates suggest that primary occupation began a few decades before 500 to *c.* 1000 CE. A number of chronological indicators include Kwale tradition pottery, glossy green-glazed monochrome ware with a bluish tinge well-distributed *c.* fifth–sixth centuries CE (Wilding 1989) although traded for a long time, Tang stoneware from China, *handi*-shaped pottery from India known from the pre-Islamic period, and pottery of the late Roman period already mentioned. The rare type of soapstone bowl mentioned is known in Asian trade from a few centuries bce (Juma 2004: 146) and it may be residual material. The types of glass beads and quality glass vessels present are chronologically sensitive, as they were among goods traded in the Mediterranean region during this period.

These results have more recently been confirmed by a series of radiocarbon dates taken from carbonised remains in midden deposits. These likewise suggest an occupation from the sixth century (Boivin and Crowther, this volume).

The primary occupation of the site ended *c.* 1000 CE. The cause might have been warfare or disease. One of the excavations (Unit A) exposed the upper skeletons of deceased Muslim individuals interred in the same grave, just at the end of primary occupation in the early eleventh century. In this almost certain mass grave, one of the skulls retains evidence of a hole, suggestive of infliction by a weapon that could be the cause of death.

Interpretations

Unguja Ukuu was perhaps eastern Africa's first emporium, with evidence for a rich settlement connected to international trade from the early sixth century CE. This predates the earliest levels at Swahili sites elsewhere on the coast. The site's location, deposits containing pottery traditions with widespread homogeneity, and dense concentrations of artefacts and production debris, indicate a high degree of functional differentiation and economic specialisation.

p.174

The town was set in at the seaward end of a long and narrow sandy patch, surrounded by coral rag ground cover, not as productive as other island landscapes for annual food cropping to support a large population. Yet the site had an ideal anchorage for the period, as noted above. The presence of numerous goods from the region and links with maritime trade emphasises its broader market function, and more recent finds of imported foodstuffs at the site reinforce this idea of Unguja Ukuu as an emporium dependent on ocean-going connections for some of its food supply (Boivin and Crowther, this volume). High-mobility social groups such as skilled craft workers and traders could have struggled to control business and achieve social positions.

The cultural complexity of Unguja Ukuu is apparent from the onset of its occupation, suggesting that it developed rapidly to market-town status at its location, rather than from consolidating a pre-existing village. Hence, a generic model of urban development (Sinclair, this volume) has been suggested regarding the nature of its establishment. The comparatively large area, about 16 ha, occupied by the site as early as the second half of the first millennium CE, with its population having been estimated to be about 1,600 (Juma 2004: 65), reflects the high status of the site within the region. The market town or emporium on Zanzibar Island during this time might well have served a much broader area within the eastern African region.

References

- Chittick, N. 1966. 'Unguja Ukuu, the earliest imported pottery and an Abbasid dinar'. *Azania* 1: 161–3.
- Clark, C. and Horton, M. 1985. 'Zanzibar archaeological survey 1984–5'. *Azania* 20: 167–71.
- Edson, E. and Savage-Smith, E. 2004. *Medieval Views of the Cosmos*. Oxford: Bodleian Library.
- Fleisher, J. B. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2011. 'Ceramics and the early Swahili: deconstructing the Early Tana Tradition'. *African Archaeological Review* 28 (4): 245–78.
- Flexner, J. M., Fleisher, J. B. and LaViolette, A. 2008. 'Bead grinders and early Swahili household economy: analysis of an assemblage from Tumbe, Pemba Island, Tanzania, 7th–10th centuries ad'. *Journal of African Archaeology* 6 (2): 161–81.
- Hawkes, J. D. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2015. 'India in Africa: trade goods and connections of the late first millennium'. *Afriques: Débats, Méthodes et Terrains d'Histoire* (06). Available online at: <http://afriques.revues.org/1752>.
- Juma, A. M. 1996. 'The Swahili and the Mediterranean worlds: pottery of the late Roman period from Zanzibar'. *Antiquity* 70: 148–54.
- Juma, A. M. 2004. *Unguja Ukuu on Zanzibar: An Archaeological Study of Early Urbanism*. Uppsala: Studies in Global Archaeology 3. Department of Archaeology and Ancient History.
- Pearce, F. B. 1920. *Zanzibar, the Island Metropolis of Eastern Africa*. London: Fisher Unwin.
- Wilding, R. F. 1989. 'The Aksumite potter's craft'. In *Excavations at Axum*, edited by S. C. Munro-Hay, 235–316. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.

14

CHIBUENE

Anneli Ekblom and Paul Sinclair

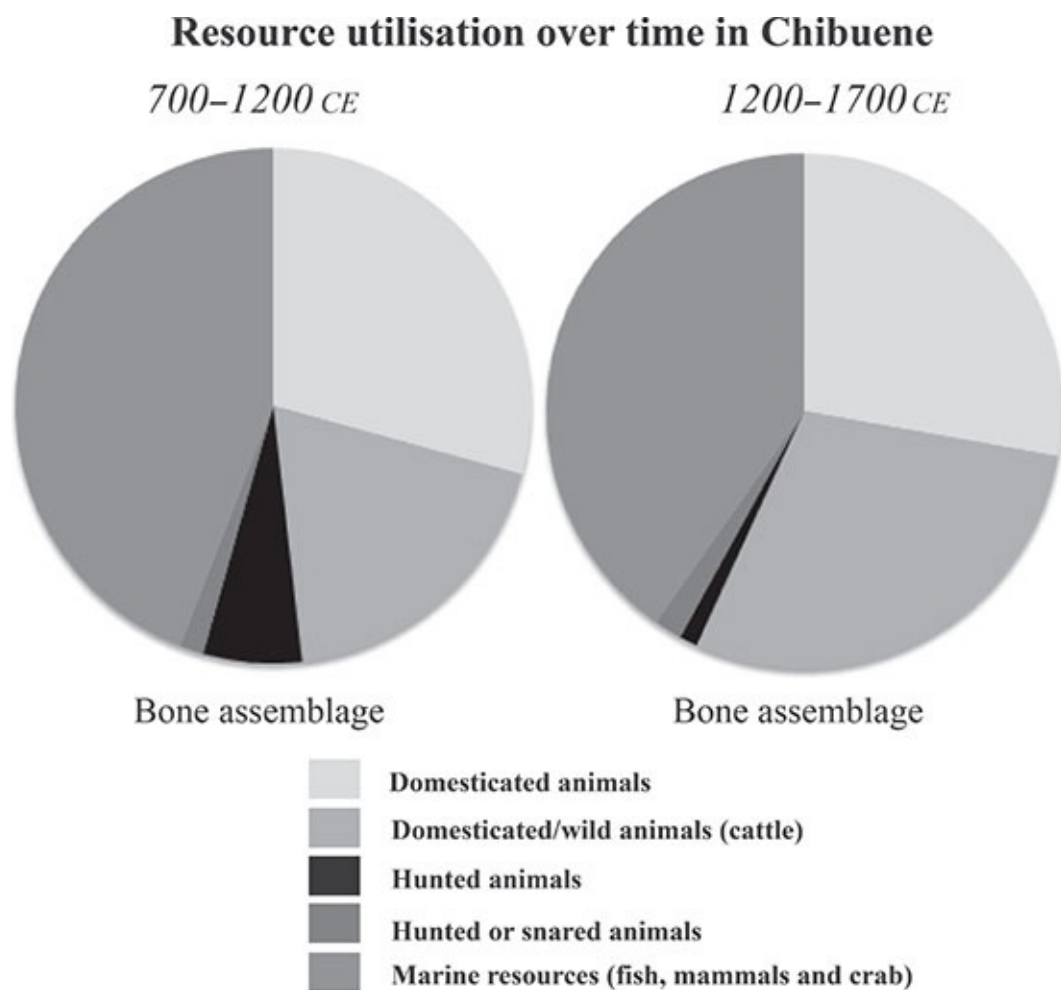
Chibuene, situated on the littoral of Vilanculos Bay, southern Mozambique (Map 1, p. xxii), is the most southerly trading hub that has been located archaeologically along the Swahili coast. Archaeological excavations have been carried out at Chibuene since 1978 (Sinclair 1982, 1987; Ekblom 2004; Sinclair *et al.* 2012). The 10 ha site was identified on the basis of a thick cultural layer associated with early occupation phase, which is now being eroded by the sea. Excavations have revealed two occupational phases; the early one is dated from *c.* 600 to 1300–1400 CE (with most C¹⁴ dates clustering between 700 and 1000), and the late occupation phase, *c.* 1300–1400 to 1650–1700 CE. Here we focus on the early occupation phase when Chibuene was part of Indian Ocean trade networks. More than a thousand glass beads have been recovered, suggesting Chibuene was the entry port for trade goods found throughout the southern African interior from the eighth century onward. Trade was an important component of emergent urban and state development, and Chibuene was a nodal point connecting three different trading networks: the southern African interior, the proto-Swahili coastal network and the wider transoceanic network. Chibuene in the later phase was no longer directly involved in Indian Ocean trade; imports are not found and there was also a change in local material culture, possibly a result of overrule from interior centres (see below).

The setting

Chibuene lies on the coast, well sheltered in Vilanculos Bay, which provides abundant marine resources. Freshwater is available through the presence of lakes plus a stream fed by a dunal aquifer. The Govuru river runs parallel to the coast a few kilometres towards the interior. Pollen analyses from the vicinity of Chibuene show that the lakes have retained water over most of the time during which this area was occupied. As residents first settled here they met a forest-savanna mosaic landscape. Forest species such as *Celtis*, *Trema* and

Moraceae, not observed in the area today, were common, as well as *Brachystegia* associated with savanna. Marine resources have been of vital importance throughout the period of occupation as is shown by the high contribution of marine fauna in the bone assemblage. Shell middens occur throughout the site, reaching a thickness of three metres at the sea cutting. The shells are dominated by *Crassostrea*, which would have provided pearls, an important trade item. Cattle, sheep and goat remains occur in both occupation phases but cattle are slightly more common in the earlier phase (Sinclair 1987; Badenhorst *et al.* 2011). Wild terrestrial fauna is surprisingly sparse throughout. Despite flotation, only two cereal seeds have been found on the site, but pollen of possible cereal grains suggest small-scale rotating cereal cultivation ([Figure 14.1](#)) (Ekblom *et al.* 2014).

p.176

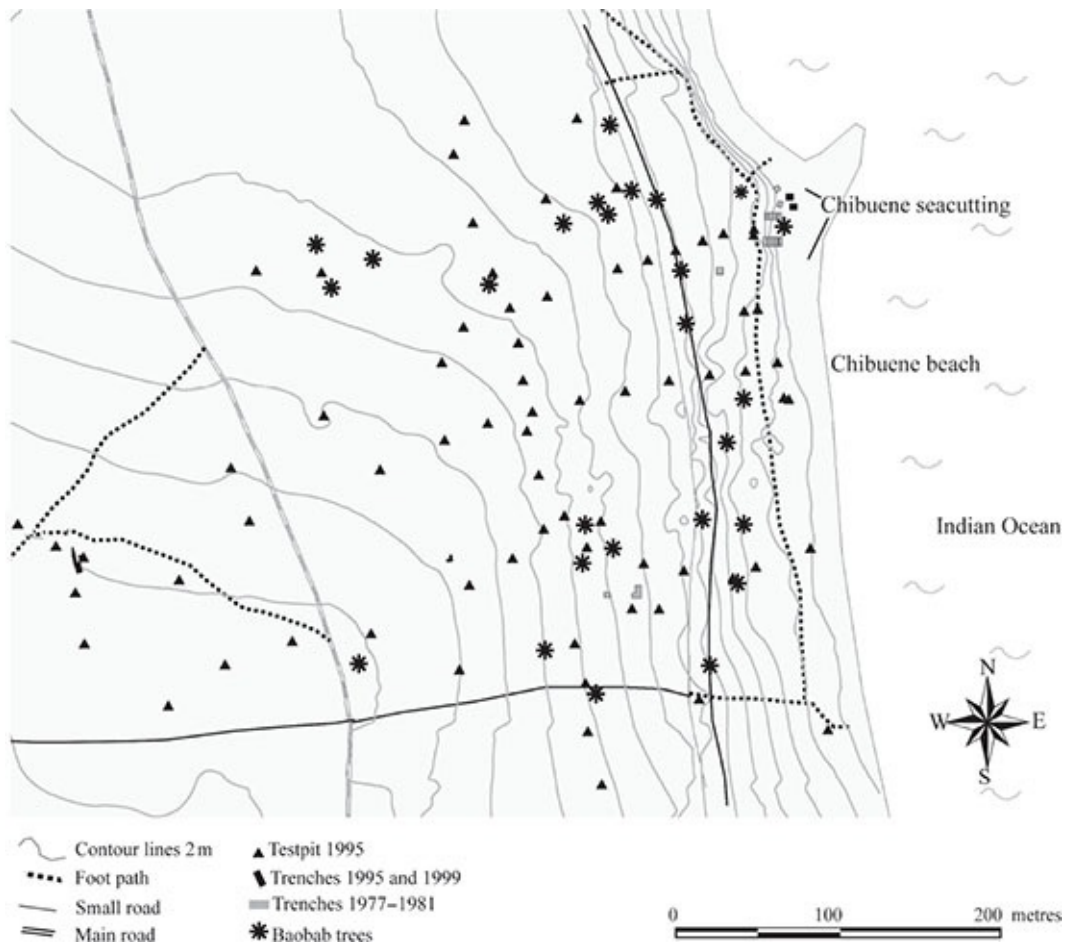


[Figure 14.1](#) A comparison of resource utilisation over time based on the bone assemblage from early and late occupation phases at Chibuene. The diagram on the right shows present-day resource-use assessment among Chibuene residents based on livelihood assessments carried out by Berger (2004)

Archaeological findings

Evidence for structures is limited at Chibuene to discrete low piles of beach rock in the early occupation, near the beach cutting associated with concentrations of glass fragments. These could well be broken floors, similar perhaps to those mentioned by Fleisher and LaViolette (1999) on Pemba.

There also appears to be clear evidence for a lime-burning pit in the 3 m-thick shell midden exposed by the sea cutting. Chibuene has no other evidence for coral or stone masonry. The thickest cultural layer is found near the sea-cutting and is being eroded. High find densities occur over an area *c.* 500 m west of the sea-cutting, encompassing an area of *c.* 10 ha ([Figure 14.2](#)) (Sinclair *et al.* 2012). An additional satellite settlement is situated 1.5 km inland on the north-eastern side of Lake Nhaucati. In the early occupation phase the settlement was more dispersed, also including the satellite settlements. The late occupation phase is characterised by high densities of finds and a relatively homogenous spread of pottery over the main part of the 10 ha large site. Chibuene has yielded three burials, found near the sea-cutting (Sinclair 1982, 1987), one of which, from the lower occupation, seems likely to have been Muslim given its orientation. Below we summarise the different find categories.



[Figure 14.2](#) Detailed excavation map of the main part of the Chibuene site with locations of test pits and trenches excavated from 1977–1999

Local ceramics

Early occupation-phase ceramics are associated with the Gokomere/Ziwa tradition in the interior and on Bazaruto Island, 600–900 CE (Sinclair 1982, 1987), or the Mzonjani facies of the Urewe tradition after Huffman (2007: 127). The Chibuene ceramics also bear strong similarities with the ETT/TIW tradition found on the Swahili coast to the north (Kirkman 1966; Chittick 1974; Horton 1996; Chami 1998; Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2011).

A number of fluted sherds associated with the early occupation also bear affinities with early first-millennium Kwale-Matola-Silver Leaves (200–500 CE) (Cruz e Silva 1976; Chami 1998; Huffman 2007); however, a 200–500 CE occupation is not yet confirmed with C¹⁴ dates.

Ceramics in the late occupation phase are completely dominated by shell-stamping, often occurring as multiple parallel or oblique bands on bowls (Sinclair *et al.* 2012).

Beads and glass

Chibuene is renowned for the presence of large quantities of glass beads and glass fragments. The vast majority of glass beads are found in the early occupation-phase layers, and most can be associated with the Zhizo series. These were made from plant-ash glass with low levels of alumina that suggest a Near Eastern origin, but manufactured using a South Asian technology; thus the origin of the beads is uncertain. Another glass bead type (Chibuene series in Wood 2012) was identified predating Zhizo, with glass of Near Eastern origin ([Figure 14.3](#)) (Robertshaw *et al.* 2010; Wood 2012, this volume); this bead type is rare in other parts of southern Africa and so far has not been identified elsewhere on the eastern African coast.

p.178



[Figure 14.3](#) Above: glass fragments from the early occupation phase of Chibuene, showing evidence of glass-working (S131a–c). Below: Zhizo-type beads from the early occupation phase of Chibuene (Photographs by M. Wood)

Later-period beads are uncommon. A few Khami Indo-Pacific series are found; these occur in the southern African interior between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries and were manufactured in India. A few copper, quartz, carnelian, bone, shell and pearl

beads were also recorded (Wood 2012).

Glass vessel fragments were found in many areas, mainly in early occupation levels. Most are too small to permit identification but some were identified as eleventh-century Islamic glass perfume bottles (Sinclair 1982). In addition, several blobs of melted glass, chunks of glass cullet and ten wasters (debris left from working glass or bead-making) were identified (Wood 2012).

Imported ceramics

As with the glass beads, most of the imported ceramics were recovered from the early occupation phase and are similar to those found on other settlements on the Swahili coast. They include white-glazed bowls and lamp fragments with painted blue decorations and everted rims, as well as seventh-century CE plain eggshell ware (Wright, personal communication). A few pieces of green-glazed ware and sgraffiato have also been retrieved. Sirafi water jars and highly porous Gulf wares have been identified (Sinclair 1982, 1987; Sinclair *et al.* 2012).

Metal and signs of metal production

Finds of metal are sparse at Chibuene, as is evidence of metal production, restricted to a few small pieces of slag and crucible fragments. A complete crucible with a lump of gold embedded in it was recovered, however; this lends credibility to oral traditions collected in 1995 by Sinclair referring to groups of men arriving from the interior with porcupine quills filled with gold dust strung around their bodies. Other traditions state clearly the lack of iron available locally for the manufacture of hoes, resulting in the hafting of elephant ribs for agricultural implements. The most common metal finds are amorphous sheets of iron, associated with the late occupation. A few copper objects were also found, including fragments of a copper bracelet identical to one found by Kiyaga-Mulindwa (1992) at Makodu near Palapye in southern Botswana, as well as a faceted lead weight (Sinclair *et al.* 2012).

p.179

Chibuene in the second millennium

After *c.* 950–1000 CE, Chibuene lost its role as a hub of trade; glass beads and trade goods are rare in the archaeological material. It is also possible that the focus of trade was relocated as additional sites have been found north of Vilanculos, on the Bazaruto Archipelago, and by the Save River (Sinclair 1987). The shift in trade patterns caused a transformation in the economy of Chibuene leading to an intensification of farming and herding activities, as shown in the pollen diagrams (Ekblom *et al.* 2014). Arabic sources

also tell of raids of Sofala country by the Waq-Waq (Madagascar-Indonesia) (Freeman-Grenville 1962; Wood 2012).

In the early second millennium, Chibuene also seems to have been more closely associated with Manyikeni, a Zimbabwe-tradition stone-walled settlement situated 50 km inland (Garlake 1976; Morais and Sinclair 1980; Barker 1978; Sinclair 1987; Liesegang 1990; Ekblom 2004). Still other stone enclosure settlements, probably related to Manyikeni, have been recently located in the Vilanculos region southwest of Chibuene, c. 10 km from the coast north of Pomene (Macamo, Duarte, Adamowicz and Sinclair, personal communications). The pottery of the late Chibuene occupation is very similar to the shell-stamped Manyikeni pottery, and the presence there of marine shell and imports from the Indian Ocean trade suggest contact with the coast. The periods of prolonged droughts associated with the Little Ice Age affected the area, causing long-term deforestation. Residents met this by intensifying farming and pastoral activities and by the exploitation of shellfish resources (Ekblom *et al.* 2014).

Chibuene in the Swahili world

Chibuene's southerly location and evidence for significant trade in the first millennium links two regions with separate socio-political trajectories and social networks: the Swahili coast and the southern African interior. The archaeology of Chibuene points at clear connections with the rest of the eastern African coast via similarities in ceramics, imported trade goods and Muslim burials. Glazed wares suggest connections with trading centres further north along the Indian Ocean and possibly Sanjan in Gujarat (Nanji 2011). Its southerly location indicates the likelihood of crews of trading vessels being resident at Chibuene at least between monsoon seasons. Chibuene acted as a node between the emerging Swahili centres and the cattle-based centres of Schroda and Mapungubwe in the Limpopo Valley. The Zhizo-series glass beads, which occur over much of the southern African interior between the eighth and mid-tenth centuries, indicate the geographical range of Chibuene's trading connections. A large number of Zhizo beads have been found at Schroda in particular and Chibuene was most likely the entry port for these (Sinclair 1987; Huffman 2000, 2009; Sinclair *et al.* 2012; Wood 2012). At Schroda both commoners and elites had access to glass beads; however the broad incorporation of glass beads in society may have facilitated the elite control later manifested in the Mapungubwe stone enclosure.

p.180

Apart from linking the coast and the interior, Chibuene may have been a nodal point also for a third southern socio-political and trade network, namely between southern Africa, the Comoros, Madagascar and the western Indian Ocean seaboard. The place of

manufacture of Chibuene- and Zhizo-type glass beads has not yet been located, however Zhizo-type glass beads are very rare on the eastern African coast (and no Chibuene-type beads have been found elsewhere). Thus, Chibuene may have had other trading partners that we still know little about. The possibility of a separate ‘southern’ trading network between southern Africa, the Comoros, Madagascar and Austronesian trade networks has been raised earlier by Shepard (1982), and must be considered when sourcing the Zhizo beads.

Other lines of evidence suggest late first millennium contacts between the African mainland and Madagascar: crops such as sorghum, cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata*) and Bambara groundnut (*Voandzeia subterranean*) are likely to have been brought from the African mainland (Beaujard 2011). Translocations of wild animals, such as the wild bush pig and blue duiker, also took place from the African mainland (Boivin *et al.* 2013). One account by Buzurg ibn Shahriyar (Trimingham 1975: 133) in 945–946 CE, describes how the Waq-Waq in outrigger canoes pillaged and conquered villages and towns of the Sofala region, which at that time probably included Chibuene. According to Buzurg, they had sailed for a year across the ocean to reach the Sofala coast where they sought ivory, tortoiseshell, leopard skins, ambergris and slaves. Wood (2012) has suggested that it was this Waq-Waq ‘invasion’ that was responsible for disruption of earlier trade patterns and the end of Chibuene as trading hub.

Whatever the cause of the demise of Chibuene as a trading hub in later centuries, the peripheral location of Chibuene on the southernmost extension of the Swahili coast seems to have been a privileged one in the first millennium. Chibuene was a node in long-distance networks, where individual traders may have played a critical role (Sinclair *et al.* 2012). Chibuene may have attracted traders precisely because it was a free zone, independent of the northern coast while, at the same time, an access point between the southern interior and the western Indian Ocean. As such it is an important site for understanding not just the formation of the southerly Swahili connections and involvement in the southern African interior, but also for understanding its possible connections with western Indian Ocean networks.

References

- Badenhorst, S., Sinclair, P., Ekblom, A. and Plug, I. 2011. ‘Faunal remains from Chibuene, an Iron Age coastal trading station in central Mozambique’. *Southern African Humanities* 23: 1–15.
- Barker, G. 1978. ‘Economic models for the Manekweni Zimbabwe, Mozambique’. *Azania* 13: 71–100.
- Beaujard, P. 2011. ‘The first migrants to Madagascar and their introduction of plants: linguistic and ethnological evidence’. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 46: 169–89.

- Berger, A. 2004. 'Food resources at Manyikeni and Chibuene, at two archaeological sites from southern Mozambique'. In *Proceedings from the Conference 'Prehistory in a Global Perspective'*, edited by T. Oestigaard, N. Anfinset and T. Saetersdal, 149–59. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports.
- Boivin N., Crowther A., Helm, R. and Fuller, D. Q. 2013. 'East Africa and Madagascar in the Indian Ocean world'. *Journal of World Prehistory* 26: 213–81.
- Chami, F. 1998. 'A review of Swahili archaeology'. *African Archaeological Review* 15 (3): 199–218.
- Chittick, H. N. 1974. *Kilwa: an Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Cruz da Silva, T. 1976. 'A preliminary report on an Early Iron Age site: Matola IV 1/68'. In *Iron Age Research in Mozambique: Collected Preliminary Results*. Maputo: Centro de Estudos Africanos, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane.
- Eklblom, A. 2004. *Changing Landscapes: An Environmental History of Chibuene, Southern Mozambique*. Uppsala: Department of Archaeology and Ancient History.

p.181

- Eklblom, A., Eichorn, B., Sinclair, P., Badenhorst, S. and Berger, A. 2014. 'Land use history and resource utilisation, 400 AD to the present, at Chibuene, southern Mozambique'. *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* 23: 15–32.
- Fleisher, J. B. and LaViolette, A. 1999. 'Elusive wattle-and-daub: finding the hidden majority in the archaeology of the Swahili'. *Azania* 34: 87–108.
- Fleisher, J. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2010. 'Authorisation and the process of power: the view from African archaeology'. *Journal of World Prehistory* 23: 177–93.
- Fleisher, J. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2011. 'Ceramics and the early Swahili: deconstructing the Early Tana Tradition'. *African Archaeological Review* 28: 245–8.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1962. *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the First to the Earlier Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Garlake, P. 1976. 'An investigation of Manekweni, Mozambique'. *Azania* 11: 25–47.
- Horton, M. C. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Huffman, T. N. 2000. 'Mapungubwe and the origins of the Zimbabwe culture'. *South African Archaeological Society Goodwin Series* 8: 14–29.
- Huffman, T. N. 2007. *Handbook to the Iron Age: The Archaeology of Pre-colonial Farming Societies in Southern Africa*. Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.
- Huffman, T. N. 2009. 'Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe: the origin and spread of social complexity in southern Africa'. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 28: 3.
- Kirkman, J. 1966. *Ungwana on the Tana*. Studies in African History, Anthropology and

- Ethnology 4. The Hague: Mouton.
- Kiyaga-Mulindwa, D. 1992. 'Iron-working at Makodu in eastern Botswana'. In *Urban Origins in Eastern Africa: Proceedings of the 1991 Workshop in Zanzibar*, edited by P. J. J. Sinclair and A. Juma, 162–6. Stockholm: Central Board of National Antiquities.
- Liesegang, G. 1990. 'Achegas para o estudo das biografias de autores de fontes narratives e outros documentos da história de Moçambique'. *Arquivo* 8: 61–142.
- Morais, J. and Sinclair, P. 1980. 'Manyikeni, a Zimbabwe in southern Mozambique'. In *Proceedings, VIIIth Panafrican Congress of Prehistory and Quaternary Studies*, edited by R. E. F. Leakey and B. A. Ogot, 351–4. Nairobi: TILMIAP.
- Nanji, R. 2011. *Mariners and Merchants: A Study of the Ceramics from Sanjan (Gujarat)*. Oxford: BAR International Series 2231.
- Robertshaw, P., Wood, M., Melchiorre, E., Popelka-Filcoff, R. S. and Glascock, M. D. 2010. 'Southern African glass beads: chemistry, glass sources and patterns of trade'. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 30: 1898–912.
- Shepherd, G. 1982. 'The making of the Swahili: a view from the southern end of the East African coast'. *Paideuma* 28: 129–48.
- Sinclair, P. J. J. 1982. 'Chibuene, an early trading site in southern Mozambique'. *Paideuma* 28: 49–64.
- Sinclair, P. J. J. 1987. *Space, Time and Social Formation: A Territorial Approach to the Archaeology and Anthropology of Zimbabwe and Mozambique c. 0–1700 ad.* Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis.
- Sinclair, P. J. J., Ekblom, A. and Wood, M. 2012. 'Trade and society on the south-east Africa coast in the later first millennium AD; the case of Chibuene'. *Antiquity* 86: 723–37.
- Theal, G. 1964. *Records of Southeastern Africa*. Cape Town: C. Struik Ltd.
- Trimingham, J. S. 1975. 'The Arab geographers and the East African coast'. In *East Africa and the Orient*, edited by H. N. Chittick and R. I. Rotberg, 115–46. New York/London, Africana Publishing.
- Wood, M. 2012. *Interconnections: Glass Beads and Trade in Southern and Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean – 7th to 16th centuries ad.* Uppsala: Department of Archaeology and Ancient History.

Swahili urbanism

15

URBANISM

Paul Sinclair

Introduction

The last thirty years have seen a significant change in the conceptualisation of African urbanism. Here I consider and evaluate that trajectory, and explore the ways in which notions of Swahili urbanism have shifted along with research. I well remember the question posed to me in 1989 by two senior and well established colleagues, ‘How is it possible for you to have a project on “Urban Origins in Eastern Africa”, when it is obvious that there are no towns apart from the stone-built centres along the coast?’. This demonstrates not just ignorance about the complexity of the African archaeological record, but also a simplistic equation of stone architecture with urbanism (see critique in Sinclair *et al.* 1993). In the intervening decades, significant progress has been made in conceptualising African towns in many new and different ways, and this has had numerous effects on the Swahili coast. It has meant seeing the outlying settlements as integral and important components of complex urban systems; more inclusive views of the ethnic constitution of cosmopolitan Swahili societies; a reduction in emphasis upon external stimuli in urban formation; and a corresponding increased knowledge of internal dynamics. Even at the scale of the World System, there has been a recognition of African agency (Beaujard 2012, this volume). Together these changes in approach amount to a paradigm shift, a move away from static definitions and externally derived trait lists, to focus on towns and their characteristics in their own terms (see, for example, Sinclair *et al.* 1993; LaViolette and Fleisher 2005).

Today, there is a wide range of research that might come under the heading of ‘urbanism’. Although this is a broadly positive move, there remains a tension between understandings of urban centres on the one hand, and urbanism itself on the other. The latter’s broader perspectives stress urbanism as a networked phenomenon across a range of settlements. Thinking about the character of urbanism includes considerations of politics and governance, particularly using the concept of city-states (Vérin 1986; Sinclair and

Håkansson 2000), studies of the built environment of towns (Horton 1996) as well as explorations of daily life, practice, and the social construction of towns (Wynne-Jones 2007, 2012). Maritime perspectives (Breen and Lane 2003; Pollard 2008; Fleisher *et al.* 2015) are central to understanding the nature of Swahili towns and their unique character.

In addition, multiple linear and non-linear processes of urbanism and complexity have been considered from a multiscalar, spatio-temporal perspective (Kusimba 1999; Kusimba and Kusimba 2005). Towns have been explored as part of networks of settlement (Abungu and Muturo 1993; Chami 1994; Fleisher 2003, 2010). In evaluating these different approaches, it seems that the methodology selected significantly influences the results of the analyses (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2015). At this stage in the development of Swahili urban studies, it might be best to point to a complex mix of hierarchy and heterarchy underpinning the urban and quasi-urban interactions along the eastern African coast. Below, I consider a series of themes that have resulted in some different visions of Swahili urbanism. These include differing forms of evidence, from urban stratigraphies to artefact studies, but also different geographies, as the view of the Swahili world changes depending on where its boundaries are drawn.

p.186

Mapping the Swahili world town by town

Pioneering contributions to the study of Swahili urbanism focused on the stone-built settlements of the Kenyan and Tanzanian coast (Sutton, this volume). Initial archaeological investigations relied mainly on surface collections and excavations of architectural features (for example, Kirkman 1954, 1966) using imported ceramics for dating. This approach was expanded, but not significantly changed, in the large-scale excavations used by Chittick at Kilwa and later, Manda (1974, 1984). Deep sondages were also excavated in stonetowns at Mtwapa (Wilding 1977; Kusimba *et al.*, this volume) and Ungwana (Kirkman 1966; Abungu 1989), and on the Somali coast in Mogadishu (Chittick 1982; Broberg 1995; Jama 1996). It was not until excavations at Shanga that extensive area excavation was developed; here Horton (1996) defined 30,000 stratigraphic units in a contextual excavation that benefitted from the techniques of medieval archaeology in England. Efforts in eastern Africa were by then mirrored in central Mozambique with early studies of stone-built settlements by Weisschoff (1941) and the remains of the inundated fortress at Sofala by Liesegang (1972) as well as surveys in northern and south central Mozambique (see Duarte 1993; Sinclair *et al.* 1993). In northern Madagascar significant work on coastal sites was carried out by Vérin (1977/78, 1986), and has been supplemented by detailed work at Mahilaka on the northwestern coast (Radimilahy 1998, this volume). In the Comoros, meticulous survey and excavations were implemented by Wright (1984), along with a series of field sorties by Allibert *et al.* (1983) and Chanudet (2000), among others. Together

these contributions provided the first characterisation of the southern and eastern extent of the proto-urban Swahili world.

Often these sites contain deep stratigraphies, and this might be seen as part of the definition of an urban centre, providing evidence for intensive occupation in a particular spot. The depth of stratigraphic deposits at Mogadishu reaches nearly 11 m, while Merka and Barawa are in the order of 6 m as are the towns of the Lamu Archipelago and Zanzibar stonetown. The deposits in the Comoros are much shallower, *c.* 2–3 m at most and less than 1 m at the extensive site of Mro Dewa on the island of Mwali. Mahilaka in northern Madagascar has two square km of deposit ranging 1–2 m thick, and this matches the Mozambican sites down to Chibuene. Other sites, particularly in the dry southern regions of Madagascar, are usually less than 1 m deep. In terms of processes of accumulation, the work done by Broberg (1995) and Dualeh Jama (1996) in the Shangani Mosque in Mogadishu, shows six phases of floor replacement in response to accumulating debris outside the mosque over a 1000-year period. Also, Horton (1996) demonstrates the presence of numerous wattle-and-daub structures below the stone-built mosque in Shanga. It is tempting to interpret the rapid rate of accumulation of urban deposits in cities of the northern coast as a function of longer established, and more intensive, processes of urbanism in the region. This might well be true. But we need to be cautious, particularly given indications of relatively transient, but urban, articulated village clusters with spatially expressed craft specialisation in the southeastern coastal hinterland of Tanzania among other places (Wembah Rashid 1992).

p.187

Madagascar and the Comoros

Broader scale, intra-site analysis that tests the spatial extent of urban sites was developed under the 'Urban Origins in Eastern Africa' programme from the 1980s onwards, and pioneered a more inclusive view of diverse forms of occupation and regional networks, all of which might be classed as urban. A combination of stratified random samples of drill cores, test pits and geochemical phosphate sampling was applied *inter alia* at Mahilaka in northern Madagascar, and completely transformed our view of urbanism in the far north of the island (see also Wright and Rakotoarisoa 1990; Rakotoarisoa 1994; Wright 2007). Radimilahy (1998, this volume) explored the first fully urban walled settlement on Madagascar with more than 500 stratigraphic cores, extensive geophysical investigation and sondages excavated to confirm surface indications and geophysical anomalies. In a series of new developments, Parker Pearson (2010) has transformed the previously known settlement history of Androy and areas to the west. He identified a series of large *c.* 20 ha hinterland settlements, dating from the tenth to fourteenth centuries and spanning different river catchments, all containing trade goods from the Swahili coast. It seems

increasingly clear that southern Madagascar was an active participant in the southwest Indian Ocean trade system. While not necessarily fully urbanised, this suggests a wide range of settlement types interacting for the purposes of trade, and positions urbanism in a web of settlement at a range of scales.

At Mbashile on the Comoros (Wright 1984; Sinclair 1992) 54 stratigraphic auger cores (50 mm diameter) were drilled, identifying *c.* 1.5–2 m of deposit covering the site. Geochemical analysis was carried out especially on the phosphates, permitting a reconstruction of the likely processes of accumulation of the deposit. It seems that the settlement was first occupied in the *c.* tenth century CE and then abandoned. It is likely that exploitation of the vegetation of the slope above the site resulted in the hill wash, visible in the stratigraphy. The site was reoccupied in the sixteenth century, suggesting a 400–500-year cycle of occupation, abandonment and reoccupation.

The remarkable extent of the evidence for trade and architectural parallels, if one includes comparable ceramic finds on the Omani coast and Gujarat, led to the conclusion that here was an active trading network throughout the western Indian Ocean region in the first millennium CE. This has variously been divided into corridors, trading hubs and northern and southern circuits. Whatever the conceptualisation, when considering urban origins one must conclude that there were few areas in eastern and southern Africa and the offshore islands that were out of contact with the rest of the world in the first millennium and certainly after.

Comparative spatial perspectives

From a comparative spatial perspective, a series of regional and site-catchment surveys have changed the ways that urbanism is understood to have fitted into a broader landscape of settlement. Pride of place must go to the work of Wilson (1982), which set the framework for spatial characterisation of Swahili urban sites. Working on the Kenya coast he differentiated three spatial categories of settlement: town, village and hamlet, and showed how they were interrelated. This was followed by Mutoro (1985, 1990), who challenged the unitary stone-built urban site model by including the extensive non-stone *kaya* settlements, and Abungu (1989) who pointed out the full range of local interactions in constituting urban settlement at Ungwana. The work of Helm (2000) set new standards for archaeological survey on the Kenya coast. Detailed surveys on Zanzibar and Pemba by Horton and Clark (1985) demonstrated the range of settlements there, while detailed coring and excavation work by Juma (2004) provided information on the layout of an urban centre at Unguja Ukuu. The most recent development of an extensive approach to the identification of sites and activity areas seems to be that of Fleisher (2010) on Pemba, where sub-surface sites and activity areas were successfully located using systematically distributed shovel-test pits. In the Tanzanian hinterland, the work of the University of Dar

es Salaam field schools throughout the 1980s and 1990s was instrumental in positioning urban sites in a broader system of settlement.

p.188

Further south in northern Mozambique, survey work (Morais 1984; Sinclair *et al.* 1993) by Madiquida (2007) in Cabo Delgado and Zambesia has filled in significant lacunae in coastal archaeology, while detailed investigation by Duarte (1993) at Somana near Nacala, has confirmed the most southerly settlement with classic Swahili architecture. Recent work by Macamo (2006) has added significantly to our knowledge of the stone-built settlements of south-central Mozambique.

Shared networks of material culture

The focus upon imported ceramics for establishing chronologies has more recently been complemented by analyses of earthenwares. These have identified a realm of artefact similarities that introduce a new way of viewing urbanism as a networked phenomenon. The similarity of early first millennium CE ceramics from the Kenya coast to southern Mozambique is remarkable, and serves to draw together the northern and southern extent of the early period of the continental part of the study region in a single ‘Tana’ or ‘Triangular-Incised Ware’ tradition (Horton 1996; Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2011). The clearest evidence for the local development of these wares found in urban contexts such as Kilwa comes from the Tanzania coast (Chami 1994, 1998), pointing to a significant contribution of farming communities with Early Iron Age ceramics in the establishment of urbanism in the region. The lack of evidence for the easterly extent of similar ceramics to the Comoros and Madagascar has been remarked upon for years, but a recent find of a vertically fluted sherd from a cave site in Ngazidja is very similar indeed to material recovered by Madiquida (2015) from the mid-first millennium CE site of Lumbi on the south bank of the Zambesi. The late-first-millennium red-slipped wares from the Comoros and Madagascar, studied most recently by Martin (2010), contrast with the material from the continental mainland, although in the second millennium it is possible to trace similarities with later wares from Kilwa (Chittick 1974). Earthenwares from southern Madagascar, first defined in a series of ceramic phases with characteristic shapes and decorative motifs (Wright and Raktoarisoa 1990), are now seen to be complemented by wares made in Madagascar. The latter are similar to the Tana tradition wares distributed throughout the eastern African coastal region and into the interior as well (Parker Pearson 2010).

The extent to which the interaction spheres of settlement and trade are characterised as urban depends heavily on the definition adopted. We are still some way from being able to define the range of spatial expression of settlement systems; we are, however, aware that

the old view of stonetowns in relative isolation must be modified to include wattle-and-daub settlements, whether of the Mogadishu and Merca hinterlands of the Benadir coast, or the Kenya and Tanzanian coast (Fleisher, 'Town', this volume). Further, the scale and number of pallisaded settlements of highland Madagascar, and the substantial and extensive sites of the southern coast, require a rethinking of urban structure and definition. We should perhaps get used to the idea that urban craft specialisation, resource processing and administration are not necessarily spatially concentrated but may be perceived as urban by the actors themselves, and as a consequence by the scholars analysing them. We can observe a range of heterarchical and hierarchical settlement systems interacting with trade and production in the Swahili world.

p.189

Food resources

The study of food resource utilisation – ignored in the pioneer phases of urban archaeology on the eastern African coast – has seen significant developments. Osteological analysis at, for example, Shanga (Horton and Mudida 1993), Manyikeni (Barker 1978, Sinclair 1987) and Chibuene (Sinclair 1987; Badenhorst *et al.* 2011) has revealed a range of relationships with resource landscapes (Quintana Morales and Prendergast, this volume). Efforts at developing systematic osteological and marine shell analysis have been inspired by Breen and Lane (2003), defining a maritime littoral archaeological frame of reference. These include detailed analyses of marine and terrestrial resource utilisation on Mafia Island (Christie 2011) and at Chibuene (Ekblom *et al.* 2014). At the latter site, the paleoenvironmental context has also been studied from a palynological perspective (Ekblom 2006). A series of detailed investigations based on wet-sieving and recovery of flotation samples has been carried out by Fuller (2003) and Walshaw (2010), and researchers associated with the 'Sealinks' project, often in previously excavated sites along the eastern African coast (for example, Fuller *et al.* 2011; Quintana Morales 2013; Quintana Morales and Horton 2014; Boivin *et al.* 2014).

Understanding urban life

Post-processual archaeology has been widely practised throughout eastern Africa with significant applications by Donley-Reid (1990) on the Swahili houses of the Kenya coast (cf. Fleisher 2015). Kus (1982) pioneered the approach in the rural sites of highland Madagascar, showing how states can be studied via the small-scale experience of individuals, and most recently Crossland (2013) has broadened the analytical frame of settlement archaeology used by, for example, Raharijoana and Valette (1959) into a post-

processual approach to the monumentality of the highlands close to Antanarivo.

Current developments in the Swahili centres of Unguja and nearby sites, using a constructivist approach that views the intertwined roles of materiality and mentality in constituting urban space, build on the early contributions about dance and performance in Swahili society (Franken 1992; Fair 2001), and inform recent work on Songo Mnara (Wynne-Jones 2010; Fleisher 2015). The importance of this work for linking 'traditional' archaeology to an arguable definition of space and emergent structure have further ramifications for power and political economy of Swahili urbanism. During the 'Urban Origins in Eastern Africa' project we collected oral traditions from Moroni on Ngazidja and surrounding sites on the Comoros. Based on these, we found that the early cattle kraals of pre-urban settlements had become 'places publique' in the urban sites, and ring structures of houses had been built around them, constituting an important component of urban living space. The walled settlements were divided into quarters with concentrations of particular craft specialities (Ben Ali 1990), with different families responsible for the upkeep of different wall sections. Attempts have been made to analyse Swahili political economy using a concept of city-states (Verin 1977/78; Sinclair and Håkansson 2000); moiety divisions and these preliminary studies show that spatial differentiation is clearly present in, for instance, the stone-built sites of the north Kenya coast, and the closely associated wattle-and-daub *kaya* settlements of the immediate hinterland. Further south, class divisions become apparent with the poorer classes in Mozambique island living in the low-lying areas from where stone was quarried for the splendid palace structures of the administration and, it might be mentioned, the first hospital in sub-Saharan Africa.

p.190

Discussion

Anyone who has had the chance to interact with Swahili urban centres cannot fail to be impressed with the capacity shown in these places of being able to incorporate into indigenous technologies and aesthetics a wide range of cultural influences from the western Indian Ocean and further afield. These include Persian, Omani, Gujarati and Portuguese contributions among others in Swahili architectural heritage. Yet, there remains an architectural integrity in the Swahili area that differs from other regions of the Indian Ocean (Gensheimer, Meier, Horton, 'Islamic Architecture', this volume). Instead of searching for the original spark that resulted in the florescence of Swahili architectural, economic, trading and literary achievements, it seems wiser to me to acknowledge the likelihood of a multi-centered developmental trajectory of urban complexity in the region. This means acknowledging the abilities of agropastoralist and farming communities along the coast in creating conditions to attract and actively participate in trade and exchange, with all of its ensuing consequences. It is interesting that different centres seem to have

risen to prominence – in some cases to hegemony – at different times. Once again the Swahili have shown their capacity to draw upon surrounding cultural traditions, synthesising and reproducing aspects of them, together with their intrinsic creativity, to constitute a unique and vibrant urban civilisation. There has been a tendency among some archaeologists to curtail the Swahili frame of reference at c. 1500. From an urban perspective there certainly is no justification for doing so, and it is hoped that the archaeology of the recent Swahili past, and indeed the future dimension of Swahili civilisation, is taken up in future research.

References

- Abungu, G. H. O. 1989. 'Communities on the River Tana, Kenya: an archaeological study of relations between the delta and the river basin AD 700–1890'. PhD diss., University of Cambridge.
- Abungu, G. H. O. and Mutoro, H. W. 1993. 'Coast-interior settlements and social relations in the Kenya hinterland'. In *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns*, edited by T. Shaw, P. J. J. Sinclair, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, 694–704. London: Routledge.
- Allibert, C., Argant, A. and Argant, J. 1983. 'Le site de Bagamoyo (Mayotte, Archipel des Comores)'. *Etudes océan Indien* 2: 5–40.
- Badenhorst, S., Sinclair, P., Ekblom, A. and Plug, I. 2011. 'Faunal remains from Chibuene, an Iron Age coastal trading station in Central Mozambique'. *Southern African Humanities* 23: 1–15.
- Barker, G. 1978. 'Economic models for the Manekweni Zimbabwe, Mozambique'. *Azania* 13: 71–100.
- Beaujard, P. 2012. *Les Mondes de l'Océan Indien: L'Océan Indien, au Coeur des Globalisations de l'Ancien Monde (7e–15e siècles)*. Paris: Armand Colin.
- Ben Ali, D. 1990. 'Recherche multidisciplinaire au Comores sur l'origine des villes'. In *Urban Origins in Eastern Africa: Proceedings of the 1989 Madagascar Workshop*, edited by P. Sinclair and J. A. Rakotoarisoa, 565–75. Stockholm: Central Board of National Antiquities.
- Boivin, N., Crowther, A., Helm, R. and Fuller, D. Q. 2013. 'East Africa and Madagascar in the Indian Ocean world'. *Journal of World Prehistory* 26 (3): 213–81.
- Boivin, N., Crowther, A., Prendergast, M. and Fuller, D. Q. 2014. 'Indian Ocean food globalisation and Africa'. *African Archaeological Review* 31 (4): 547–81.
- Breen, C. N. and Lane, P. 2003. 'Archaeological approaches to East Africa's changing seascapes'. *World Archaeology* 35 (3): 469–89.

- Broberg, A. 1995. 'New aspects of the medieval towns of Benadir in Southern Somalia: topography, climate and population'. In *Islamic Art and Culture in Sub-Saharan Africa*, edited by K. Ådahl and B. Sahlström, 111–22. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis Figura Nova series 27.
- Chami, F. 1994. *The Tanzanian Coast in the Early First Millennium ad: An Archaeology of the Iron-Working, Farming Communities*. Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Uppsaliensis.
- Chami, F. 1998. 'A review of Swahili archaeology'. *African Archaeological Review* 15 (3): 199–218.
- Chanudet, C. 2000. *Moheli: Une Île des Comores à la Recherche de son Identité (Archipel des Comores)*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Chittick, H. N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Chittick, H. N. 1982. 'Medieval Mogadishu'. *Paideuma* 28: 45–62.
- Chittick, H. N. 1984. *Manda: Excavations at an Island Port on the Kenya Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Christie, A. 2011. 'Exploring the social context of maritime exploitation in the Mafia Archipelago, Tanzania: an archaeological perspective'. PhD diss., University of York.
- Crossland, Z. 2013. *Ancestral Encounters in Highland Madagascar: Material Signs and Traces of the Dead*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Donley-Reid, L. W. 1990. 'A structuring structure: the Swahili house'. In *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space*, edited by S. Kent, 114–26. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Duarte, R. T. 1993. *Northern Mozambique in the Swahili World: An Archaeological Approach*. Uppsala: Studies in African Archaeology.
- Eklom, A. 2006. 'Makrofossilanalys'. In *Trekanten och Björkgården, boplatslämningar från brons och järnålder vid Fullerö*, edited by A. Molander and J. Wikborg. Uppsala. SAU Skrifter 13.
- Eklom, A., Eichorn, B., Sinclair, P., Badenhorst, S. and Berger, A. 2014. 'Land use history and resource utilisation, 400 AD to the present, at Chibuene, Southern Mozambique'. *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* 23: 15–32.
- Fair, L. 2001. *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890–1945*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Fleisher, J. 2003. 'Viewing stonetowns from the countryside: an archaeological approach to Swahili regions, AD 800–1500'. PhD diss., University of Virginia.
- Fleisher, J. B. 2010. 'Swahili synoecism: rural settlements and town formation on the central East African coast, AD 750–1500'. *Journal of Field Archaeology* 35: 265–82.
- Fleisher, J. B. 2015. 'Situating the Swahili house'. In *Theory in Africa, Africa in Theory: Locating Meaning in Archaeology*, edited by S. Wynne-Jones and J. B. Fleisher, 72–89. London: Routledge.

- Fleisher, J. B. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2011. 'Ceramics and the early Swahili: deconstructing the Early Tana Tradition'. *African Archaeological Review* 28 (4): 245–78.
- Fleisher, J., Lane, P., LaViolette, A., Christie, A., Horton, M., Pollard, E., *et al.* 2015. 'When did the Swahili become maritime?' *American Anthropologist* 117 (1): 100–15.
- Franken, M. A. 1992. 'The dance and status in Swahili society'. *Journal for the Anthropological Study of Human Movement* 7 (2): 77–93.
- Fuller, D. 2003. 'African crops in prehistoric South Asia: a critical review'. In *Progress in African Archaeobotany*, edited by K. Neumann, A. Butler and S. Kahlheber, 239–71. Koln: Heinrich Barth Institut.
- Fuller, D., Boivin, N., Hoogervorst, T. and Allaby, R. 2011. 'Across the Indian Ocean: the prehistoric movement of plants and animals'. *Antiquity* 85: 544–58.
- Helm, R. 2000. 'Recent archaeological research on the iron-working farming communities of coastal Kenya'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 35 (1): 183–9.
- Horton, M. C. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. C. and Clarke, C. M. 1985. 'The Zanzibar archaeological survey'. *Azania* 20: 167–71.
- Horton, M. C. and Mudida, N. 1993. 'Exploitation of marine resources: evidence for the origin of the Swahili communities of East Africa'. In *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns*, edited by T. Shaw, P. Sinclair, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, 673–93. London: Routledge.
- Jama, A. D. 1996. 'The origins and development of Mogadishu AD 1000 to 1850: a study of urban growth along the Benadir coast of Somalia'. *Studies in African Archaeology* 12. Uppsala.
- Juma, A. 2004. *Unguja Ukuu on Zanzibar: An Archaeological Study of Early Urbanism*. Uppsala: Uppsala University Department of Archaeology and Ancient History.

p.192

- Kirkman, J. S. 1954. *The Arab City of Gedi: Excavations at the Great Mosque, Architecture and Finds*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Kirkman, J. S. 1966. *Ungwana on the Tana*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Kus, S. 1982. 'Matters material and ideal'. In *Symbolic and Structural Archaeology*, edited by I. Hodder, 47–62. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1999. *The Rise and Fall of Swahili States*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- Kusimba, C. and Kusimba, S. 2005. 'Mosaics and interactions: East Africa 2000 bp to the present'. In *African Archaeology: A Critical Introduction*, edited by A. B. Stahl, 392–419. Oxford: Blackwell.
- LaViolette, A. and Fleisher, J. B. 2005. 'The archaeology of sub-Saharan urbanism: cities

- and their countrysides'. In *African Archaeology: A Critical Introduction*, edited by A. B. Stahl, 327–52. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Liesegang, G. 1972. 'Archaeological sites from the Bay of Sofala'. *Azania* 7: 147–59.
- Macamo, S. 2006. *Privileged Places in South Central Mozambique, the Archaeology of Manyikeni, Niamara, Songo and Degue Mufa*. Uppsala: Studies in Global Archaeology.
- Madiquida, H. 2007. *The Iron Using Communities of the Cabo Degado Coast from 1000 ad*. Uppsala: Studies in Global Archaeology 8.
- Madiquida, H. 2015. 'Archaeological and historical reconstructions of the foraging and farming communities of the lower Zambeze: from the Mid Holocene to the Second Millennium ad'. Uppsala: Studies in Global Archaeology 19.
- Martin, N. 2010. *Les Productions Céramiques de l'Océan Indien Occidental: Implications Culturelles au Carrefour d'Influences*. Paris: INALCO.
- Morais, J. 1984. 'Mozambican archaeology: past and present'. *African Archaeological Review* 2: 113–28.
- Mutoro, H. W. 1985. 'The spatial distribution of the Mijikenda Kaya settlements on the hinterland Kenya coast'. *Transafrican Journal of History* 14: 78–100.
- Mutoro, H. W. 1990. 'The development of settlement pattern studies on the Kenya Coast'. Paper presented at the PanAfrican Association of Anthropologists Congress, Nairobi.
- Parker Pearson, M. 2010. *Pastoralists, Warriors and Colonists: The Archaeology of Southern Madagascar*. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports.
- Pollard, E. 2008. *The Archaeology of Tanzanian Coastal Landscapes in the 6th to 15th Centuries ad (The Middle Iron Age of the Region)*. Oxford: BAR International Series.
- Quintana Morales, E. 2013. 'Reconstructing Swahili foodways: the archaeology of fishing and fish consumption in coastal East Africa, AD 500–1500'. PhD diss., University of Bristol.
- Quintana Morales, E. M. and Horton, M. C. 2014. 'Fishing and fish consumption in the Swahili communities of East Africa, 700–1400 CE'. *Internet Archaeology* 37, doi:10.11141/ia.37.3.
- Radimilahy, C. 1998. *Mahilaka: An Archaeological Study of an Early Town in North West Madagascar*. Uppsala: Studies in African Archaeology.
- Raharijaona, S. and Valette, J. 1959. 'Autres cimitières sakalava dans d'autres régions'. *Bulletin de Madagascar* n.s. 153: 1–34.
- Rakotoarisoa, J. A. 1994. 'Le peuplement de l'Anosy. Les rapports de l'homme et son environnement dans l'extreme Sud-Est de Madagascar'. PhD diss., l'Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientale, Paris.
- Sinclair, P. J. J. 1987. *Space, Time and Social Formation: A Territorial Approach to the Archaeology and Anthropology of Zimbabwe and Mozambique c. 0–1700 ad*. Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis.

- Sinclair, P. J. J. 1992. 'Information technology applications in the "Urban Origins in Eastern Africa" project: the wider context'. In *Urban Origins in Eastern Africa: Proceedings of the 1991 Workshop in Zanzibar*, edited by P. Sinclair and A. Juma, 268–75. Paper No. 8, Working Papers from The Swedish Central Board of National Antiquities.
- Sinclair P. J. J. 1995. 'The origins of urbanism in East and Southern Africa: a diachronic perspective'. In *Islamic Art and Culture in Sub-Saharan Africa*, edited by K. Ådahl and B. Sahlström, 99–110. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis Figura Nova Series 27.
- Sinclair, P. and Håkansson, T. (2000). 'The Swahili city state culture'. In *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures*, edited by M. Hansen, 463–82. Copenhagen: The Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters.
- Sinclair, P. J. J., Shaw, T., Andah, B. and Okpoko, A. 1993. 'Introduction'. In *The Archaeology of Africa: Foods, Metals and Towns*, edited by P. J. J. Sinclair, T. Shaw, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, 1–31. London: Routledge.

p.193

- Vérin, P. 1977/78. 'Une novella documentation sur l'histoire des Cotes de l'Ouest de l'Océan Indien'. *Etudes d'Histoire d'Afrique* 9–10: 213–16.
- Vérin, P. 1986. *The History of Civilization in Northern Madagascar*. Rotterdam: Balkema.
- Walshaw, S. C. 2010. 'Converting to rice: urbanization, Islamization and crops on Pemba Island, Tanzania, AD 700–1500'. *World Archaeology* 42 (1): 137–54.
- Weisschoff, H. A. 1941. *The Zimbabwe Monomotapa Culture*. Madison: General Studies in Anthropology.
- Wembah Rashid, J. 1992. 'Settlements in the southeastern Tanzania hinterland'. In *Urban Origins in Eastern Africa: Proceedings of the 1991 Workshop in Zanzibar*, edited by P. Sinclair and A. Juma. Paper No. 8, Working Papers from The Swedish Central Board of National Antiquities.
- Wilding, R. 1977. 'The ceramics of the Lamu Archipelago'. PhD diss., University of Nairobi.
- Wilson, T. H. 1982. 'Spatial analysis and settlement patterns on the East African coast'. *Paideuma* 28: 201–19.
- Wright, H. T. 1984. 'Early seafarers of the Comoro Islands: the Dembeni Phase of the IXth–Xth centuries AD'. *Azania* 19: 13–59.
- Wright, H. T. (Ed.) 2007. *Early State Formation in Central Madagascar: An Archaeological Survey of Western Avaradrano*. Ann Arbor: Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan Memoirs No. 43.
- Wright H. T. and Rakotoarisoa, J. A. 1990. 'The archaeology of complex societies in Madagascar: case-studies in cultural diversification'. *Urban Origins in Eastern Africa: Proceedings of the 1989 Madagascar Workshop*.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2007. 'Creating urban communities at Kilwa Kisiwani, Tanzania, AD

800–1300’. *Antiquity* 81: 368–80.

Wynne-Jones, S. 2010. ‘Remembering and reworking the Swahili Diwanate: the role of objects and places at Vumba Kuu’. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 43 (3): 407–27.

Wynne-Jones, S. 2012. ‘Exploring the use of geophysical survey on the Swahili coast: Vumba Kuu, Kenya’. *Azania* 47 (2): 137–52.

Wynne-Jones, S. and Fleisher, J. 2014. ‘Swahili urban spaces of the East African coast’. In *Making Ancient Cities: Studies of the Production of Space in Early Urban Environments*, edited by K. Fisher and A. Creekmore, 111–44. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wynne-Jones, S. and Fleisher, J. 2015. ‘Fifty years in the archaeology of the eastern African coast: a methodological history’. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 50 (4): 519–41.

16

TOWN AND VILLAGE

Jeffrey Fleisher

Introduction

The archaeology of the Swahili coast is known primarily through excavations and documentation of towns, those settlements that witnessed rapid development after 1000 CE: places of commerce, of formal religious practice, and that showed evidence of hierarchy (Kirkman 1954; Chittick 1974; Horton 1996; Kusimba 1996; Radimilahy 1998; LaViolette and Fleisher 2005, 2009). In the last twenty years, however, researchers have recognised that to understand the full range of activities and lifeways in coastal stonetowns they need to investigate linked settlements at a variety of scales. These include villages in the immediate countryside surrounding towns (c.10–15 km from the town; Wright 1992; Radimilahy 1998; Fleisher 2010), those in the near hinterland extending up to 30 km inland (Abungu 1989; Wynne-Jones 2007a; Pawlowicz 2012), and those in the distant hinterland (or ‘interior’), perhaps extending hundreds of kilometres into the continent (Abungu and Mutoro 1993; Helm 2000; Walz 2010, this volume; Kusimba *et al.* 2013). In this chapter, I will focus on the differences between towns and villages at the smaller scales, covering the immediate countrysides and near hinterlands surrounding towns.

I will briefly define towns and villages in the Swahili context, and then explore different typologies and models developed in the archaeological and ethnographic literature. To examine how such models fit the archaeology to date, I present data from seven regions along the coast, each anchored by a Swahili stonetown (Lamu, Mtwapa, Chwaka, Kilwa Kisiwani, Songo Mnara, Mikindani and Nzwani) (Map 1, p. xxii), thus including regions from four archipelagos: Lamu, Zanzibar, Kilwa and the Comoros. These case studies demonstrate the variability of town-village relationships along the coastal corridor: some villages were bound closely to emerging stonetowns and became increasingly ‘rural’ as urban centres developed, while others remained largely independent from towns, but managed connections through economic and ritual practices. These data challenge approaches to the Swahili coast that imagine a series of highly similar towns; although

towns shared many characteristics forged through interaction, they were part and parcel of their regional histories.

p.195

Towns and villages: a brief description

Towns

Swahili towns, located on mainland and island coasts, are the most visible archaeological traces of the ancient Swahili as they contain architectural remains including mosques, houses, tombs and town walls made of rough coral blocks faced with lime plaster. Some have survived surprisingly intact, such as Gede in Kenya (Pawlowicz, this volume), or Songo Mnara and Kilwa Kisiwani in southern Tanzania (Wynne-Jones, this volume). Stonetowns were first and foremost settlements for a diverse population of elite, commoner and enslaved people. Although best known for their elaborate and composite stone houses where elites lived (Garlake 1966; Allen 1979; Donley 1987; Wynne-Jones 2013; Meier, this volume), they also contained earth and thatch houses within the town walls and in the area surrounding the town (Fleisher and LaViolette 1999; LaViolette and Fleisher 2009).

Towns were also cosmopolitan locales (LaViolette 2008), places of trade and commerce, where merchants from Indian Ocean ports took up residence seasonally to exchange goods and replenish supplies. Such overseas connections allowed for the consumption and display of exotic goods by Swahili elites – porcelains and Middle Eastern pottery, silk clothing and tapestries, glass and carnelian beads from India – that created the basis for an economy of distinction within the town and region more broadly (Kusimba 1999a). Finally, towns were spaces of religious and ritual practice: they contained the most impressive mosques, and probably religious leaders who supported them (Horton 1991, 2004). Stone-built mosques with carved coral decorations surrounding the *mihrab* served both for Friday prayers and as places where religious and other leaders were buried in elaborate tombs (Horton, 'Islamic Architecture', this volume). The latter served as destinations, where people prayed and made offerings.

Stonetown density and size varied. Horton (1994) has recognised three archipelagos – Lamu, Zanzibar, Kilwa – in which stonetowns are clustered on islands. Many stonetowns developed outside the archipelagos as well (such as Mogadishu, Mombasa, Malindi and Sofala). Together they were the largest settlements on the coast, but were varied in population size and architectural elaboration. Some, such as Gede, Mtwapa, Shanga and Songo Mnara, were built densely with coral architecture, while others, like Chwaka, contained few stone houses. All stonetowns contained stone mosques and tombs. Finally, certain settlements dwarfed all others, such as Manda, Pate and Kilwa, containing

extensive settlement areas and massive structures such as Husuni Kubwa at Kilwa. It is clear that the ability to build large coral-built monuments correlated with coastal power and influence, and that these sites were also more powerful in the Indian Ocean trade networks than small settlements.

Villages

The category of ‘village’ is more complicated because their nature depends somewhat on proximity and relationship to a town. As villages leave few material indicators, there are simply not many known archaeologically. Villages are often places of self-sustaining production, including food (farming, fishing, shell collection) and craft production (iron, beads, pottery, cloth). As in other parts of the world (Schwartz and Falconer 1994), villages were the most enduring form of settlement on the eastern African coast and near hinterlands. Village settlements existed prior to and alongside the emergence of Swahili stonetowns; most Swahili towns were villages before expanding into larger, more densely populated towns.

p.196

A number of archaeologists have devised village classifications based on their physical features. Wilson’s (1982) study of Kenyan coastal settlements is the most often-cited attempt to address settlement patterns and the relationship between town and country for the Swahili, based on a database of some 400 settlements. He defined five types based on site size and the presence and amounts of stone (coral rag or limestone) architecture; these range in size from one to 15+ hectares, and from dispersed homesteads and hamlets with a single mosque or tomb, to cities with dozens of stone domestic structures, mosques and tombs.

Kusimba (1999b: 119) has offered a four-part classification of villages: walled villages, closely built villages, dispersed villages and hamlets, focusing on differences in ‘availability of suitable land, space and security’. This typology draws on ethnographic understandings. My own research on Pemba Island used a typology that included fieldhouse, hamlet, village, small town and town (Fleisher 2003: 134–5). These distinctions were made based on both site size and the nature of the deposits, including field houses and hamlets of 1 ha or less, villages of up to 3 ha, and small and larger towns, greater than 5 ha in size. Only small and large towns included stone architecture. Both Kusimba’s and my own classification scheme are based on features visible to archaeologists, and are thus typologies of site features and size. When *interpreting* the patterns of these different settlement types, however, archaeologists often draw upon the ethnographic record and what is known about the historical relationships between towns and villages, to which I now turn.

Ethnographic and historical definitions of villages and towns

Because so little archaeological research on ancient villages has occurred on the Swahili coast, the ethnographic record has been used often as the source of analogy for thinking about the nature of villages and their relationships with stonetowns. In particular, research on mid-twentieth-century villages in Lamu and Zanzibar by Middleton (1961, 1972, 1992; Horton and Middleton 2000) and Prins (1961, 1971) has been used analogically.¹ Middleton's (1992: 54–75) ethnographic description of the differences between town and country argued for two types of Swahili towns, 'stone-towns' and 'country-towns'. Country-towns were places of small-scale craft and foodstuff production, with goods consumed locally and traded to nearby stonetowns (Middleton 1992: 58).

Although this model clearly differentiates town and village settlements, Middleton argues (1992: 55) that the entwined nature of stone- and commoner-towns meant that the distinction between the two did not fit comfortably with traditional notions of the urban/rural divide, as he notes: 'simplistic geographical notions that make a distinction between urban and rural communities have little relevance for the Swahili'. Thus, ethnographically, Swahili settlements can be viewed as 'ends of a continuum' with the distinction between stone- and country-towns representing ideal types (Middleton 1992: 55).

Prins (1961: 90) also distinguished two types of villages: 'one being "tribal", so to speak, a type represented by the settlements of the Hadimu, Tumbatu, etc., and the other type being "peasant", to which belong the settlements owned by a town in the political sense'. The former villages housed the long-term inhabitants of the islands (in this case on Zanzibar, in what Middleton would call 'country-towns'), while the latter were often inhabited by freed slaves and newcomers. Tribal villages were independent, with a 'local identity represented in their headman and elders'. Prins recognised that any definition that sought to fix the social form of villages was problematic, because of significant residential and trader mobility. Thus, he argued, 'territorial ties are weakly developed, both affectively and institutionally' (1961: 90). Prins (1961: 91) also understood these village 'types' as historically significant: 'the shift from one type to another has been one of the processes in which the political history of the coast was shown'. His descriptions alert us to the possibility that Middleton's stone-town/country-town distinction may be a remnant of colonial history rather than a historical pattern of development, as Swahili settlements that 'seemed' rural developed alongside the colonial cities of Zanzibar and Lamu rather than in relationships with them (see Caplan, this volume).

p.197

Interactions between town and country

Most overviews of the ancient Swahili distinguish rural and urban settlements and argue

for interactions between them (cf. Sinclair and Håkansson 2000: 463). Such models would seem to suggest that villages and towns were bound closely together, with towns atop a regulated, hierarchical system in which villages provided agricultural goods and other materials to towns in exchange for imported and produced goods. In this way, life in villages would have been shaped by the emergence of stonetowns. An alternative model for town–village relationships suggests a looser affiliation: towns were imagined as reliant on the village-made products, but villages were generally self-sufficient and thus independent from towns, even while interacting with them.

Kusimba's (1999b: 123–4) arguments about the relationship between towns and villages represent the first model. Based on Wilson's (1982) survey data, he argues that rural settlements provided agricultural goods, raw materials and finished products to urban dwellers. Kusimba's (1999b: 119) depiction draws on traditional models of urbanism. He views countryside relationships between rural and urban settlements as hierarchical, suggesting that social and economic ties to communities in the more distant hinterland were relatively egalitarian, involving 'debt patronage, fictive or real kinship, friendships and gift exchange, and client or trade partnerships'. Thus, in his view, town dwellers built relationships as trade partners with the more distant settlements, but were more coercive with those in their immediate countryside.

The second model of town–village interaction is best represented by the work of Middleton (1992; see also Horton and Middleton 2000). He has argued that country-towns were relatively self-sufficient; in contrast, stonetowns were dependent on commoner goods produced in villages (Middleton 1992: 56; also Kusimba 1999b: 133, 142) and other stonetowns. In exchange for these goods, country-town residents received other products from the hinterland and overseas ports, as well as military protection when needed. As Middleton (1992: 56–7) notes, 'country-towns have been and are more or less self-sufficient, but the stone-towns are not so; all are linked by patterns of exchange of foodstuffs, labor, many kinds of productive, technical, and processing services, religious cults, [and] marriage partners . . .'; Horton and Middleton (2000: 136) have used the term 'conurbation' for this cohesive settlement system. In this way supra-local interactions were important to Swahili stonetowns, as might be expected based on other city-state systems.

While all such descriptions offer tantalising models with which to examine the deeper Swahili past, they stand as hypotheses to be tested with archaeological data, rather than necessarily accurate images of ancient settlements and relationships. It is also becoming increasingly clear that there is much variability in the settlement landscapes of the coast, and the organisation and role of rural settlements within settlement landscapes was highly variable as well (Horton 1994; Wynne-Jones 2007a; Fleisher 2010). With Swahili origins research no longer at the centre of coastal archaeology, we need now to avoid extrapolating the particular histories of rural peoples from the most-studied regions, Lamu and Zanzibar. The organisation of life in modern, rural Swahili villages was forged in the complicated history involving fifteenth–sixteenth-century Portuguese intrusions, and later

eighteenth–twentieth-century Omani, German and British colonialism. Finally, we need to question the underlying assumption that urban and rural settlements were parts of integrated settlement systems – what Middleton (1992: 55) once called the ‘internally complex organic unity of Swahili society’.

p.198

The theme that can be drawn from ethnographic models of the relationship between towns and villages is that village settlements became increasingly important to stonetowns, as the latter became more involved in long-distance trade and the economies of elite consumption. In both models, rural production is understood as supplanting that of the urban core, as villagers produced for the regional system rather than for themselves alone. What distinguishes the two models, however, is the nature – featuring relative dependence or autonomy – of the political and economic relationship between towns and villages. To examine how particular regions fit these models, the rest of this chapter includes a summary of regional research.

Lamu Archipelago

Although the archaeology of Lamu Archipelago stonetowns looms large in the literature on the ancient Swahili (Chittick 1967, 1984; Brown 1985; Horton 1996; Wilson and Omar 1997), there has been almost no research on associated village communities (but see Horton 1996). Vernet’s (2004) historical research on seventeenth- to nineteenth-century Lamu offers some of the best insights into the precolonial near-hinterlands of Lamu, supported by insights from Portuguese and other historical documents. Vernet divides Swahili territories into three zones – the town, the *mashamba* (gardens and plantations on the islands, 2004: 391–3) and the agricultural hinterland (2004: 393ff). For the towns of the Lamu Archipelago (Manda, Shanga, Lamu, Faza, Siyu), this hinterland lay on the mainland across from the island-based towns, and it was there where most agricultural crops were grown. Some fields were probably under the control of independent villages, but others were farmed by inhabitants of the towns themselves, who moved to the mainland for planting and harvesting (Vernet 2004: 395). In addition, some villages specialised in activities such as fishing and cutting mangrove poles, while others were more independent agriculturally.

On the Kenyan coast, therefore, mainland villages were crucial to the sustainability of the island towns: villages not only provided the setting in which to collect and grow food for urban residents, but were key nodes in which goods were collected from the more distant hinterland: meeting points between Swahili traders and non-Swahili groups. Some of these goods, such as ivory and animal skins, were ultimately traded by individuals in the towns to foreign merchants who carried them to distant ports within the Indian Ocean

world. Lamu towns and mainland villages were thus interdependent. This was likely much the same as the better documented case of seventeenth-century Mombasa: here a group of farming villages inhabited by the Mijikenda considered themselves ‘vassals’ of the Sultan of Mombasa and provided grain to the city. That same sultan, however, distributed cloth to the Mijikenda and fed them whenever they came to town (Willis 1993). In the Lamu Archipelago, a similar situation might have existed between non-Swahili mainland villages, like those occupied by the Oromo who formed alliances with Swahili towns (for example, Pate) providing ivory in exchange for cloth, while also providing military assistance when needed (Vernet 2004: 403–4).

Mtwapa

On the southern Kenyan coast, Mtwapa has been the object of research since the 1980s (Kusimba 1999b, 2008; Kusimba *et al.* 2013; see Kusimba *et al.*, this volume). This research has included extensive excavations in the town, survey of the countryside around the town, locating sites along Mtwapa Creek, and a hinterland survey extending more than 100 km into the interior in the Tsavo region. The focus here will be on the countryside scale. Along *c.* 20 km of Mtwapa Creek, Kusimba *et al.* (2013: 405) found 21 Late Iron Age sites. These finds suggest ‘significant differences in settlement patterns and ceramic technology’ between the villages and Mtwapa itself. Investigations at a number of villages indicate they were inhabited exclusively by farmers and fishers. Radiocarbon dates confirm that village settlements like Kizingitini were contemporary with fourteenth–fifteenth-century Mtwapa.

p.199

The Mtwapa region findings suggest relatively independent villages in the near hinterlands, where Kusimba *et al.* (2013: 405) argue ‘a distinctive village lifeway persisted in the shadow of the stonetown’. The material assemblage from these village sites indicates that they were independent in the production of goods – for example, all pottery was made locally, with no imported pottery found. The local pottery was ‘distinguishable’ from that of Mtwapa by ‘decorative motifs, form, and style’: there were fewer forms and styles in the village assemblages and the finishing and firing was determined to be ‘inferior’ to that of Mtwapa. Kusimba *et al.* (2013: 406) have suggested that these distinctions in the quality and diversity of pottery production may indicate different organisation of production, with specialised production carried out at Mtwapa, and household production in the villages. Finally, Kusimba *et al.* (2013: 406) argue that, ‘urbanites’ broader networks increasingly differentiated them from their rural kin’, through greater emphasis on consumption and display of foreign goods, creating significant differences in taste.

Pemba Island

Archaeological survey in the northern part of Pemba Island documented more than 30 sites in the area surrounding two known eleventh–fifteenth century stonetowns, Mkia wa Ngombe and Chwaka (Fleisher 2003, 2010). The results documented a shifting pattern of settlement from the seventh to fifteenth centuries CE. Three periods of settlement were identified: 750–1050, 1050–1300, and 1300–1500, with stonetowns emerging and flourishing from 1050 onwards. During the first period, the region was densely settled with fieldhouses, hamlets and villages, located across the region. At 1050, with the foundation of the two main stonetowns, there was a slight reduction in the number of regional villages, a trend that continued from 1300–1500. These data suggest that ‘populations were moving from the countryside into the towns during these periods’ (Fleisher 2010: 274). The settlement sequence suggests that the foundation of towns created a demographic pull from the surrounding countryside, based on new opportunities that towns afforded. I have argued that this ‘may have been based partly on the desire of regional populations to form a religious community’ as Islam became the dominant religious affiliation. This can be seen in investment in monumental mosque architecture for congregational mosques, structures that continued to be rebuilt in larger and more elaborate forms in Pemba’s stonetowns (LaViolette and Fleisher 2009). Wright (1993: 671–2) articulated a similar argument, suggesting that the practice of Islam was one of the key means through which towns and villages became entwined, ‘bind[ing] villages and smaller centers more closely to emerging towns’.

Unlike the settlement regions already discussed, Pemba offered abundant areas for agricultural production a short walk from the towns. Thus, consolidation of the population into towns probably meant that most farmers simply lived within the town, and moved out daily or seasonally to farm. After the twelfth century some villages appeared in the countryside around the towns. One such village, Kaliwa, just north of Chwaka, was a farming and fishing village, perhaps a place where fish were collected and distributed to various towns on Pemba Island. What distinguishes this village from earlier ones is that its residents had much greater access to imported goods than did village residents before 1000 CE. This suggests that pre-1000 villages were more self-sufficient and independent than later ones; the latter were likely more dependent on the larger towns economically, politically and religiously.

p.200

Kilwa Archipelago

Kilwa Kisiwani

Wynne-Jones' (2005, 2007a) research around Kilwa Kisiwani included a regional survey and excavations at a sample of the sites located. The survey, carried out on the adjacent mainland, documented 66 sites spanning the centuries of urban growth, 800–1500 CE, in a relatively continuous pattern of settlement across the region during these centuries. Based on these findings, Wynne-Jones (2007a: 374) has concluded that 'the numbers of sites across all periods were fairly similar, with no obvious changes accompanying the growth of the town the process of urbanization in the Kilwa hinterland did not entail a dramatic change in the settlement of the region'.

Excavations at village sites within the region indicate the variable ways villages were linked to the urban centre at Kilwa. While Kilwa was expanding greatly between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, countryside settlements remained consistent, with no evidence of a growing settlement hierarchy or dramatic changes in village economy. Most of the sites were occupied briefly, some with evidence of reoccupation, suggesting a shifting settlement pattern in response to the environmental challenges of farming in marginal soils. While there were overall increases in the number of imported goods through time, particularly glass beads and pottery, these were found in small numbers. Production data are limited to small numbers of spindle whorls, suggesting an inland cotton industry. The few whorls found at village sites pale in comparison to the large numbers found at Kilwa, suggesting a vibrant cotton industry in the town (Chittick 1974). Many whorls from the countryside, however, were in the Kilwa style, providing a stylistic link to the urban industry. Wynne-Jones (2007a) suggests that rural production was not meant for urban consumption, but for countryside markets or household use.

For Wynne-Jones, changes in the Kilwa countryside were less a political or economic process than one of identity and difference (2007b). The urban setting provided a unique context in which to perform certain elite identities, but not exclusively so. Locally made pottery that may have had ritual uses, ubiquitous at Kilwa, was found in small amounts in the countryside; this suggests that ritual practices may have cross-cut the village-town divide, providing a link for rural people to participate in urban identities. What is striking about the data from the Kilwa countryside is the degree of continuity through time; settlements continued to be occupied in ways similar to previous centuries, and production shifted little in response to an expanding and expansive urban economy at Kilwa. It may be that the most enduring transformation of the countryside was the development of an urban focus for the construction of regional identities. It was, as Wynne-Jones (2007b) has argued, in the direction of Kilwa that rural identities were formed, even as they remained relatively unencumbered by the urban political economy.

Songo Mnara

Recent archaeological survey of Songo Mnara Island by Pawlowicz (Pawlowicz and Dobbs n.d.) offers an unprecedented look at the immediate hinterlands of the site of Songo

Mnara, a fourteenth- to sixteenth-century stonetown. The survey was full coverage – all ground surfaces were inspected and shovel tests were excavated at 50 m intervals throughout the island. This level of survey coverage is unmatched on the Swahili coast and offers important insights into this scale of settlement coverage. Although other archaeologists have recognised that settlement often extends just beyond the walls of Swahili towns (Fleisher and LaViolette 1999; Kusimba *et al.* 2013), this survey mapped the extensive scatter of local artefacts distributed across the island. Although there were concentrations of artefacts just south and east of the town of Songo Mnara, most were located at least a kilometre from the town. Pawlowicz and Dobbs (n.d.) have argued that the distribution of settlement across the island was likely ‘related to access to subsistence resources’, namely marine resources and arable land.

p.201

The survey of Songo Mnara Island is instructive in that it demonstrates the active role the near countrysides played in town life. But the survey results should also give archaeologists pause: the difficulty in defining discrete archaeological ‘sites’ from the distribution of material suggests that there was great movement within the countryside, and that strict site-based approaches to countryside landscapes might be imposing site boundaries on largely non-site materials. Although such a survey strategy is impossible for much larger regions, it offers new insights into the daily life of the town and its interaction with a broader island landscape.

Mikindani

Archaeological research in the region surrounding the town of Mikindani has offered a dramatically different understanding of ancient patterns of town and village life along the coast. Pawlowicz’s archaeological survey of an approximately 20 km-square region around the town was successful in locating 55 archaeological sites dated between the first centuries CE and the nineteenth century. One of the main findings that distinguishes this region is that Mikindani did not develop as a town until *after* the fifteenth century CE (Pawlowicz, ‘Southern Coast’, this volume). This stands in stark contrast to most other Swahili towns that emerged incrementally between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries; during the fifteenth century, most towns north of Mikindani were at their apogee after centuries of development. The region around Mikindani was not empty; there were many sites located throughout the coastal plain associated with the best agricultural land. Throughout the first half of the second millennium, these sites grew in number and size. These villages were producing agricultural goods and iron products, and were well-connected with each other: the distribution of marine goods throughout the region ‘suggests that there were intra-regional subsistence and economic connections’ that were ‘fostered and maintained’ (Pawlowicz 2012: 500).

Without a particular centre from which to differentiate, villages in the Mikindani region appeared materially similar in their food consumption, house construction, and craft production such as pottery. In this case, the villages remained interconnected and relatively autonomous, throughout a period where other coastal villages in distant regions were connected to more powerful towns through consensual and coercive exchange patterns. Pawlowicz's research thus offers an example that adds complexity to the story of village life in the second-millennium eastern African coast. He argues that 'Swahili society was not limited to well-known port cities, but neither did it include every community that ever made a Tana/TIW pot or acquired an Indian Ocean trade good' (2012: 503).

Comoros

Research by Wright (1984, 1992, this volume) in the Comoros has offered a window into the settlement systems on these small volcanic islands. The latter offer a dramatically different context from other regions in that they were distant from both the eastern African and Madagascar coasts. Survey on Nzwani has provided insights into the changing settlement dynamics of this small island system (Wright 1992). During the eleventh to thirteenth centuries there were six settlements, including two larger 'towns' (Sima and Domoni, each 8 ha in size), as well as two large villages (3–4 ha) and two hamlets (0.3 ha). Wright (1992: 126) has argued that there is 'no suggestion that smaller settlements were concentrated around larger ones in a dependent relationship' during this period. During the fourteenth–fifteenth centuries, the number of settlements on Nzwani increased to ten sites, including the enlarged sites of Sima and Domoni (each c. 11 ha), one small town (5.5 ha), one village and six hamlets. These settlements were scattered across the island, with some up to 2 km from the coast. During these centuries smaller hamlets and village sites clustered around towns, suggesting that post-thirteenth century there was a 'reorganization of social relations' (Wright 1992: 127) in which towns and villages were more closely bound together.

p.202

Concluding thoughts

In recent years, archaeologists have begun to explore the variability of Swahili stonetowns through the composition and organisation of the town, the nature of long-distance trade, and processes leading to their emergence (LaViolette and Fleisher 2005, 2009; Wynne-Jones 2007a; Fleisher 2010). This chapter explores an additional dimension of variability: the nature of village life and the relationship between towns and villages along the coast. Ethnographic models for town–village interaction on the coast present a very schematic

image of the types of relationships that engaged these two types of settlements. They offer, however, basic models for comparison with the archaeological data, of villages with different degrees of independence from emerging towns.

The case studies make clear that the variability of the relationships between towns and villages has much to do with the nature of village settlements and their inhabitants. Some villages might be considered ‘Swahili’, with populations connected to and identified with stonetown settlements. These are likely the ones found in closest proximity to towns; an example might be those on the islands of Pemba, Songo Mnara and the Comoros. But many other villages were populated by people that would have considered themselves something other than ‘Swahili’, even though bound to stonetowns in complicated ways, for example, villages on the *bara* in the Lamu Archipelago and those opposite Kilwa. This suggests we need to consider the differences between villages on islands with stonetowns, and those on the near mainland. This distinguishes further the relationships between town and village on the larger, more distant islands like Pemba, Zanzibar and Mafia, and those nestled in close proximity to the mainland as in the Lamu and Kilwa Archipelagos.

We need also to understand better the types of activities that occurred in villages, to explore how those were either in service of, or redundant to, the activities occurring in nearby towns. The village of Kaliwa, near Chwaka on Pemba Island, seems to have been a hub for fishing and may have been thus a somewhat specialised location that served the town in a specific way. In contrast, village deposits on Songo Mnara Island seem to be simply locales where farmers lived while working their fields, perhaps occupied only seasonally, with no evidence of specialisation. Finally, there are those village settlements that were largely self-sufficient, but with evidence of interaction with towns, such as the villages that Wynne-Jones (2007a) documented on the Kilwa mainland.

Finally, this overview should offer a strong argument for greater attention to the archaeology of villages after 1000 CE. At present, most excavations at village sites have focused on the earliest periods of coastal settlement, from 650–1000 CE; such sites have been the subject of research aimed at ‘Swahili origins’ (Chami 1994) or have been explored as the nascent versions of later towns built atop them (Horton 1996). There is almost no research on coastal village settlements contemporary with stonetowns, during the periods of stonetown development, 1100–1500 CE. This is where research should be focused, along with a greater understanding of the distribution of activities across more extensive stonetown landscapes.

Note

- ¹ Additional ethnographic research on rural settlements includes Caplan’s (1975, 1997) work on Mafia Island and Landberg’s (1977) study of a coastal Tanzanian village.

References

- Abungu, G. H. O. 1989. 'Communities on the River Tana, Kenya: an archaeological study of relations between the delta and the river basin AD 700–1890'. PhD diss., University of Cambridge.
- Abungu, G. H. O. and Muturo, H. W. 1993. 'Coast-interior settlements and social relations in the Kenya hinterland'. In *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns*, edited by T. Shaw, P. J. J. Sinclair, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, 694–704. London: Routledge.
- Allen, J. d. V. 1979. 'The Swahili house: cultural and ritual concepts underlying its plan and structure'. In *Swahili Houses and Tombs of the Coast of Kenya*, edited by J. D. V. Allen and T. H. Wilson, 1–32. London: Art and Archaeology Research Papers.
- Brown, H. 1985. 'History of Siyu: the development and decline of a Swahili town on the northern Kenya coast'. PhD diss., Indiana University.
- Chami, F. 1994. *The Tanzanian Coast in the Early First Millennium ad: An Archaeology of the Iron-Working, Farming Communities* (Vol. 7). Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Uppsaliensis.
- Chittick, H. N. 1967. 'Discoveries in the Lamu Archipelago'. *Azania* 2: 37–68.
- Chittick, H. N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*. Memoir 5. Nairobi and London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Chittick, H. N. 1984. *Manda: Excavations at an Island Port on the Kenya Coast*. Memoir 9. Nairobi and London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Donley, L. W. 1987. 'Life in the Swahili town house reveals the symbolic meaning of spaces and artefact assemblages'. *African Archaeological Review* 5: 181–92.
- Fleisher, J. B. 2003. 'Viewing stonetowns from the countryside: an archaeological approach to Swahili regional systems, AD 800–1500'. PhD diss., University of Virginia.
- Fleisher, J. B. 2010. 'Swahili synoecism: rural settlements and town formation on the central East African coast, AD 750–1500'. *Journal of Field Archaeology* 35: 265–82.
- Fleisher, J. B. and LaViolette, A. 1999. 'Elusive wattle-and-daub: finding the hidden majority in the archaeology of the Swahili'. *Azania* 34: 87–108.
- Garlake, P. S. 1966. *The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast*. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa and Oxford University Press.
- Helm, R. 2000. *Conflicting Histories: 'The archaeology of iron-working, farming communities in the central and southern coast region of Kenya.'* PhD diss., University of Bristol.
- Horton, M. C. 1991. 'Primitive Islam and architecture in East Africa'. *Muqarnas* 8: 103–16.
- Horton, M. C. 1994. 'Closing the corridor: archaeological and architectural evidence for emerging Swahili regional autonomy'. In *Continuity and Autonomy in Swahili Communities:*

- Inland Influences and Strategies of Self-Determination*, edited by D. Parkin, 15–21. London: School of Oriental and African Studies.
- Horton, M. C. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. Memoir 14. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. C. 2004. 'Islam, archaeology, and Swahili identity'. In *Changing Social Identity with the Spread of Islam: Archaeological Perspectives*, edited by D. Whitcomb, 67–88. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.
- Horton, M. C. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Kirkman, J. S. 1954. *The Arab City of Gedi: Excavations at the Great Mosque, Architecture and Finds*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1996. 'Spatial organization at Swahili archaeological sites in Kenya'. In *Aspects of African Archaeology: Papers of the 10th Conference of the Pan African Association of Prehistory and Related Subjects*, edited by G. Pwiti and R. Soper, 703–14. Harare: University of Zimbabwe.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1999a. 'Material symbols among the precolonial Swahili of the East African coast'. In *Material Symbols: Culture and Economy in Prehistory*, edited by J. E. Robb, 318–41. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1999b. *The Rise and Fall of Swahili States*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- Kusimba, C. M. 2008. 'Early African cities: their role in the shaping of urban and rural interaction spheres'. In *The Ancient City: New Perspectives on Urbanism in the Old and New World*, edited by J. Marcus and J. Sabloff, 229–46. Santa Fe: SAR Press.
- Kusimba, C. M. and Kusimba, S. B. 2005. 'Mosaics and interactions: East Africa, 2000 bp to the present'. In *African Archaeology: A Critical Introduction*, edited by A. B. Stahl, 392–419. Oxford: Blackwell.
- p.204
- Kusimba, C. M., Kusimba, S. B. and Dussubieux, L. 2013. 'Beyond the coastscapes: preindustrial social and political networks in East Africa'. *African Archaeological Review* 30 (4): 399–426.
- LaViolette, A. 2008. 'Swahili cosmopolitanism in Africa and the Indian Ocean world, AD 600–1500'. *Archaeologies* 1: 24–49.
- LaViolette, A. and Fleisher, J. B. 2005. 'The archaeology of sub-Saharan urbanism: cities and their countrysides'. In *African Archaeology: A Critical Introduction*, edited by A. B. Stahl, 327–52. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- LaViolette, A. and Fleisher, J. B. 2009. 'The urban history of a rural place: Swahili archaeology on Pemba Island, Tanzania, 700–1500 AD'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 42 (3): 433–55.
- Middleton, J. 1961. *Land Tenure in Zanzibar*. London: HMSO.

- Middleton, J. 1972. 'Patterns of settlement in Zanzibar'. In *Man, Settlement, and Urbanism*, edited by P. J. Ucko, 285–92. London: Duckworth.
- Middleton, J. 1992. *The World of the Swahili: An African Mercantile Civilization*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Pawlowicz, M. 2012. 'Modelling the Swahili past: the archaeology of Mikindani in southern coastal Tanzania'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 47 (4): 488–508.
- Pawlowicz, M. and Dobbs, S. n.d. 'Viewing the Indian Ocean world from a Swahili island: survey of Songo Mnara, Tanzania, 1400–1900 CE'. Unpublished MS.
- Prins, A. H. J. 1961. *The Swahili-Speaking Peoples of Zanzibar and the East African Coast: Arabs, Shirazi, and Swahili*. London: International Africa Institute.
- Prins, A. H. J. 1971. *Didemic Lamu, Social Stratification and Spatial Structure in a Muslim Maritime Town*. Groningen: Instituut voor Culturele Antropologie der Rijkuniversiteit.
- Radimilahy, C. 1998. *Mahilaka: An Archaeological Investigation of an Early Town in Northwestern Madagascar*. Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Uppsaliensis.
- Schwartz, G. M. and Falconer, S. E. 1994. *Archaeological Views from the Countryside: Village Communities in Early Complex Societies*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Sinclair, P. J. J. and Håkansson, T. 2000. 'The Swahili city-state culture'. In *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures*, edited by M. H. Hansen, 463–82. Copenhagen: Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters.
- Vernet, T. 2004. 'Le territoire hors les murs des cités-états Swahili de l'archipel de Lamu, 1600–1800'. *Journal des Africanistes* 74 (1–2): 381–411.
- Walz, J. R. 2010. 'Route to a regional past: an archaeology of the lower Pangani (Ruvu) Basin, Tanzania, 500–1900 CE'. PhD diss., University of Florida.
- Willis, J. 1993. *Mombasa, the Swahili and the Making of the Mijikenda*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Wilson, T. H. 1982. 'Spatial analysis and settlement patterns on the East African coast'. *Paideuma* 28: 201–19.
- Wilson, T. H. and Omar, A. L. 1997. 'Archaeological investigations at Pate'. *Azania* 32: 31–76.
- Wright, H. T. 1984. 'Early seafarers of the Comoro Islands: the Dembeni Phase of the IXth–Xth centuries AD'. *Azania* 19: 13–59.
- Wright, H. T. 1992. 'Early Islam, oceanic trade and town development on Nzwani: the Comorian Archipelago in the XIth–XVth centuries AD'. *Azania* 27: 81–127.
- Wright, H. T. 1993. 'Trade and politics on the eastern littoral of Africa, AD 800–1300'. In *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns*, edited by T. Shaw, P. J. J. Sinclair, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, 658–70. London: Routledge.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2005. 'Urbanisation at Kilwa, Tanzania, AD 800–1400'. PhD diss., University of Cambridge.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2007a. 'Creating urban communities at Kilwa Kisiwani, Tanzania, AD

800–1300’. *Antiquity* 81: 368–80.

Wynne-Jones, S. 2007b. ‘It’s what you do with it that counts: performed identities in the East African coastal landscape’. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 7 (3): 325–45.

Wynne-Jones, S. 2013. ‘The public life of the Swahili stonehouse’. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 32: 759–73.

17

MAMBRUI AND MALINDI

Dashu Qin and Yu Ding

Malindi, an area that includes Malindi Old Town, the Gede (or Gedi) Ruin, the Mambrui site, and some other settlements, is an important part of the Swahili cultural zone (Map 1, p. xxii). This particular area, also known as the ancient kingdom of Malindi, is representative of the medieval societies found around the Sabaki River estuary. This chapter focuses on the sites of Malindi Old Town and Mambrui.

Previous research

In the past, researchers have discussed the Malindi area from both documentary and archaeological perspectives. In documentary research, scholars including Berthold Laufer (1975), Paul Pelliot (2003), Zhang Xinglang (1977) and Su Jiqing (1981) have focussed on the issue of whether or not certain place names mentioned in Chinese accounts refer to Malindi. Many such place names discovered in ninth–fifteenth-century Chinese accounts have been examined, including ‘Molin’, ‘Manali’, ‘Cengyaoluo’, ‘Malin’ and ‘Malindi’. In eleventh–thirteenth-century Arabic accounts, the location of Malindi as recorded by Arab travellers al-Idrisi (1100–1165 CE; Freeman-Grenville 1962: 19–20), Abu al-Fida (1273–1331 CE) (Freeman-Grenville 1962: 23–4), and others has not yet been confirmed. Nevertheless, the Arabic accounts contain clearer and more accurate recordings of eastern Africa and are more reliable than the Chinese accounts. This is possibly due to proximity of the Middle East to eastern Africa, and to Arab authors’ personal experiences of visiting places there.

Compared with other settlements along the Swahili coast, Malindi Old Town and Mambrui had received little attention from archaeologists before the Chinese team began their extensive work in 2010. J. S. Kirkman (1964: 90) had conducted trial excavations in Malindi and found sherds dating from as early as the fourteenth century. Kirkman had worked at Gede (1954, 1963) and Kilepwa (1952) in the coastal area of Malindi district. He

also conducted investigations at Mambrui (called Quilimanci in Portuguese accounts [Kirkman 1964: 95]). Kirkman re-assessed the dating of wares found in Malindi Old Town and adjacent sites, providing a significant baseline for later work. E. B. Martin (1973: 19) also conducted research into Malindi's history; he believed its territory stretched 600 m along the coastline and 240 m inland, a total of 17 ha, a slightly smaller area than present Malindi city with its estimated population of 3,500. Another 2,000 residents were thought to live outside the city in wattle-and-daub settlements and neighbourhoods.

p.206

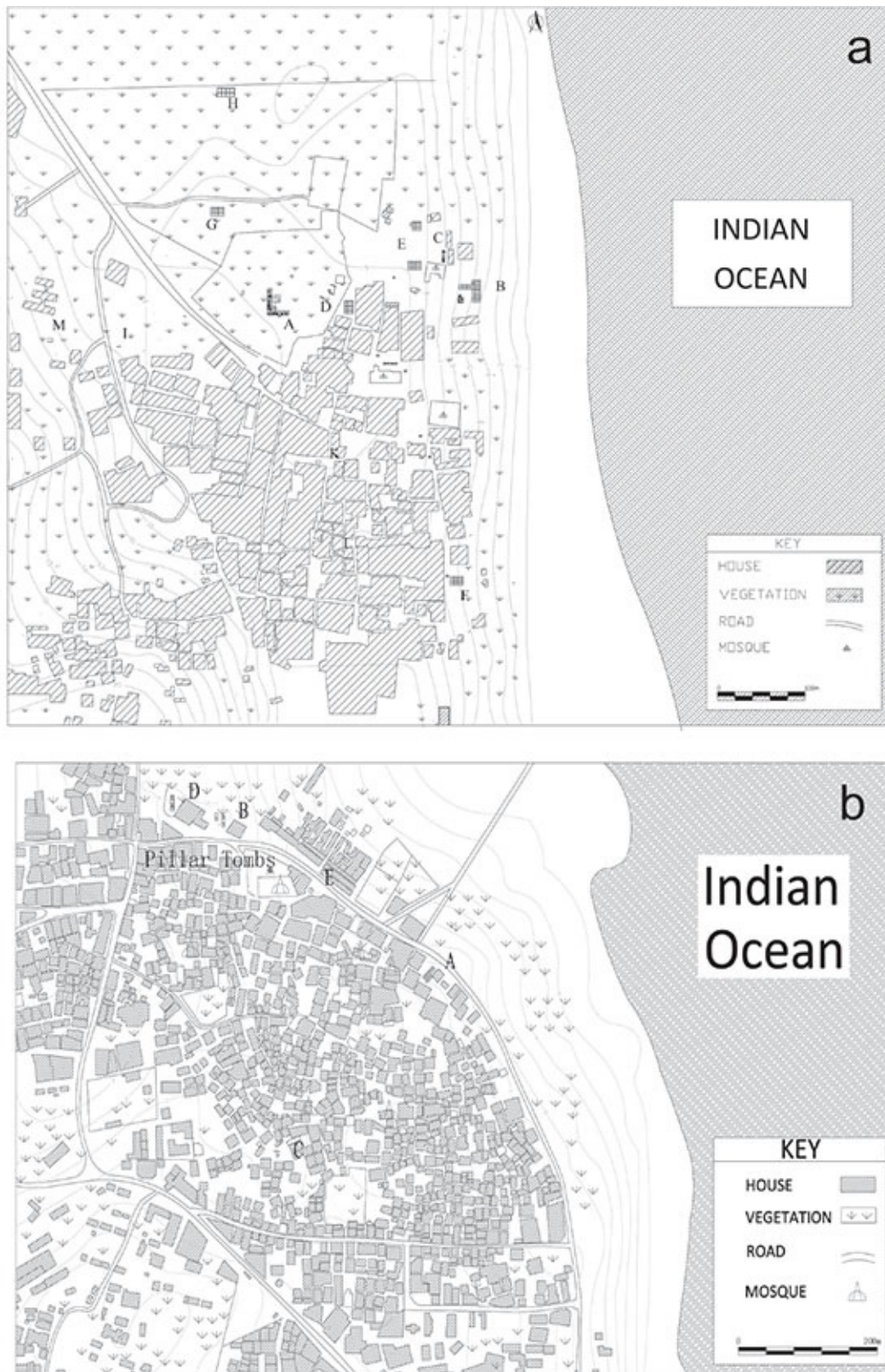
Vasco da Gama recorded that Arabs formed the ruling class in Malindi (Martin 1973: 26–8). Until the 1980s, western scholars tended to focus on the relationships between Malindi city and its Arab residents; the emphasis on foreign elements there has since been critiqued. Beginning in the 1980s, researchers from the National Museums of Kenya have carried out work at ancient sites in the region. T. H. Wilson (1980) conducted further research at Kilepwa, near Malindi. Later researchers began to think that Malindi might have been relocated in ancient times; it may have shifted to the city's present site due to re-alignment of the estuary and desertification of the coastal area. C. Bitá conducted a succession of small-scale excavations and studies near Malindi at the Khatibu Mosque (Bitá 2006), Jiwe Jemedari (Bitá 2006) and Mambrui (Bitá 2012). The sites date to the c. thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In 2010, Bitá found a number of locally made Early Iron Age wares (EIW). Earthenware similar to that found in other sites has previously been dated to the second to sixth centuries (Soper 1967; Chami 1994: 90–1, 1999). In addition, Triangular Incised Ware (TIW) and Swahili Tradition wares (SW) have also been found in Mambrui. Both types of earthenware were made after the EIW period until the eighteenth century. Bitá accordingly concluded that Mambrui was probably the earliest settlement in the Malindi area, and possibly even the birthplace of Malindi civilisation (2012). However, because his excavations were limited, they could not provide either complete strata from the site's founding up to the present, nor clear boundaries for the settlement. Bitá (2012) indicates that the earthenware sherds discovered are small in size and quantity. Therefore, although we value his contribution to the region's culture history, we do not consider the finds as providing sufficient evidence to conclude that the site could date from as early as the third to sixth centuries, as claimed.

Mambrui

Between 2010 and 2013, Peking University and the National Museums of Kenya formed a joint archaeological team, which dug 12 units (Units A–M) with a total area of 1,227 m² at Mambrui. The excavation centred on the cemetery, with Chinese-ceramic-decorated pillar tombs, and the Qubba Mosque. Mambrui functioned as a large-scale settlement from ancient times until the present. Consequently, the archaeological team applied excavation

methods recommended by Chinese archaeologists to recover ancient cities elsewhere. Surface investigations were carried out on 14 units, with the aim of finding the site's boundaries and how they changed over time (Figure 17.1a).

Excavations yielded a large quantity of remains, including house foundations, sanitary facilities, smelting and casting furnaces, walls and wells. This enabled us to establish the functional areas of the settlement such as the central area, elite residences, craft-producing sectors, and so on. Many kinds of artefacts were found, including more than 500 Chinese ceramic sherds, approximately 3,000 Islamic sherds and more than 130,000 local earthenware sherds. Other remains recovered included iron slag, tools for casting, a few glass beads, Indian earthenware, and animal bone. Samples were extracted for radiocarbon dating, indicating settlement as early as the late ninth century (Ding 2015). Chinese ceramics from the ninth to early twentieth century have provided important evidence for dating cultural layers at Mambrui. Further, the Islamic sherds could range in date from the tenth to sixteenth centuries. The combined evidence drawn from the imported and local pottery and radiocarbon results allow confident dating of the site (Ding 2015; Qin 2015).



[Figure 17.1](#) (a) Map of the distribution of excavation sectors at Mambrui; (b) Map of the distribution of excavation sectors, Malindi Old Town

Based on our analysis we have been able to divide the Mambrui occupation into six stages. Stage I existed from 850 to 1000 CE, during which time activities covered an area

of some 5 ha. The central area is Area G, while Area A is close to the hinterland. The quantity of local earthenware found is small and few imported wares were recovered; a ninth-century celadon storage jar made in Guangdong Province was found, possibly shipped on from Lamu as a container. Iron-making remains have not been located.

Stage II lasted from 1000 to 1150 CE, a period during which the settlement developed economically and expanded in size. Activities covered an area of 10 ha, and the settlement began to expand eastward toward the coastline. We noted a marked increase in the number of local earthenware sherds and the appearance of new kinds of ceramics, including Islamic pottery with incised decoration (*sgraffiato*) and both Yue and Longquan wares from China. At the same time, furnaces possibly used for iron smelting were found.

Stage III spanned from 1150 to 1275 CE. The Mambrui settlement continued its development, with its eastern boundary almost reaching the coastline. The settlement also expanded southward, growing to cover approximately 15 ha. The Qubba Mosque was established at this time as the centre of the settlement. Elite stone-built residences and iron-making workshops have been found near the mosque in Area E. Remains of the iron industry are scattered broadly across Areas A, E, G and H. The quantity of imported Chinese ceramics also increased in Stage III. These combined phenomena demonstrate that the settlement had completed its early expansion and attained a significant level of prosperity. Its major economic patterns were established, and maritime trade was growing.

p.208

Stage IV, the peak period for Mambrui, started in 1275 and continued until 1435 CE. The settlement continued to expand eastward and southward, covering 30 ha. The central area containing stone structures that could have covered as much as 7–8 ha. Remains of Islamic pottery and Chinese ceramics are present in large quantities. The cultural layers dating to this period, mostly in Areas A, G and H, also contain furnace wall fragments and significant quantities of slag, indicating that iron working continued to flourish. Furthermore, Chinese official blue-and-white and Longquan porcelains excavated from these layers indicate that the Zheng He fleet may well have arrived in Mambrui at this time.

Stage V was a time of change and can be subdivided into two stages. The first is from 1435 to 1520 CE, when indications are that Mambrui began to decline: the settlement area shrank to some 15 ha, and the geographical centre shifted eastward and southward. As before, Area A remained the core of the settlement. Remnants of iron making and Chinese ceramics diminished. It should be noted that after the Ming Xuande emperor's reign (1426–1435 CE), China banned maritime trade. In the meantime, the Portuguese took strict control of the surrounding area after landing at Malindi, even destroyed other settlements to maintain Malindi as a centre for maritime trade, with clear ramifications for Mambrui. While Mambrui's participation in maritime trade thus changed dramatically in this century, Islamic pottery continued to be consumed locally, perhaps brought in from

Malindi itself. This situation is similar to that at Gede; the settlement recovered at the end of the fifteenth century, and went on to reach a new, small peak of activity. In particular, Islamic pottery was still being imported there as well.

The second sub-stage of Stage V lasted from 1520 to 1640 CE, during which time the settlement shrank to approximately 10 ha. However, huge pillar tombs, larger even than those in the Friday Mosque in Malindi Old Town, appear at this time. Sherds of Chinese ceramics and Islamic pottery are numerous from this period, indicating that the settlement remained prosperous. We question, however, what the settlement exported after iron working disappeared; it is possible that traders turned to exporting human captives as slaves.

Stage VI lasted from 1640 to 1900 CE. Mambrui kept declining early in this period, possibly because the Dutch East India Company by this time controlled maritime trade in the region, and the Malindi area was no longer a vital entrepôt in global trade networks. Nevertheless, Mambrui seems to have expanded in its shoreline area, where remains of large sheds and quantities of European relics have been identified. The settlement eventually adopted the plan that survives to the present, covering an area of 8–10 ha.

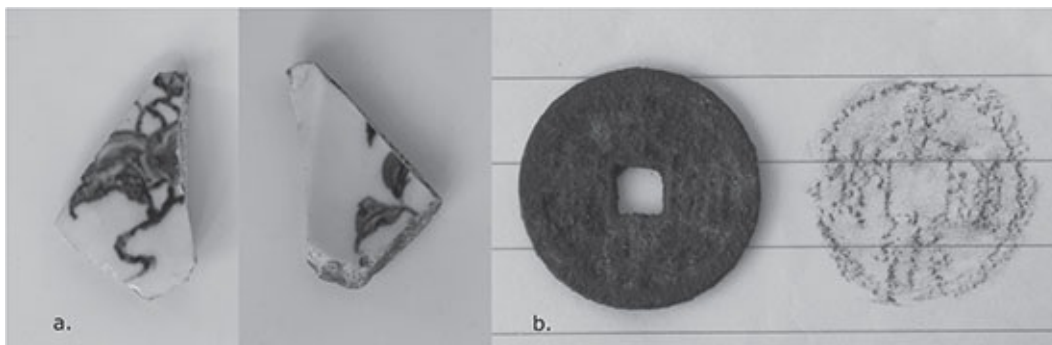
In summary, Mambrui reached its peak between the late thirteenth and early fifteenth century. During this period its territory stretched to some 300,000 m², after which it declined to its present extent. We shall now discuss two conclusions arising from our research at Mambrui.

The first concerns the changing settlement area. Between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, Mambrui's core area was around Areas A and G. Based on the remains of walls found in Layer 5 of Area G, the entire space from Area A to G may be the core area at that time, as the settlement gradually expanded eastward. Area A eventually became the centre of the settlement at the end of the thirteenth/early fourteenth century. Although there are early remains in Area H, the quantity of them is small. This indicates that Area H was a marginal zone during this period, although cultural activities were present from earliest settlement. Although Mambrui shows signs of expanding southward and eastward before the fourteenth century, these areas do not contain rich cultural layers, indicating that Areas K, M, Eb and C are all located in a marginal zone. After the fourteenth century, Mambrui expanded, and remains of relatively tall stone structures have been found in Area Eb. This indicates that the core elite population of the settlement expanded to the east at this time. Furthermore, remains in Area A show dense cultural activity, while Areas G and H began to decline. After the fifteenth century, the settlement continued to shift to the east and its population in the western sectors diminished.

Area A remained at a peak, with all kinds of stone structures, furnaces and sanitary facilities appearing. In the sixteenth century, large stone structures and residences appear

in Areas D and E. Area A changed its function and in the seventeenth century it became a large cemetery. Areas D and E still contained large houses. Thereafter, Mambrui continued its expansion to the south and east until it reached its present configuration. In summary, throughout its history, the Mambrui site grew eastward and southward (Ding 2015). Regardless of its shifting location, the craft-producing and residential areas appear to be closely linked. Further, the handicraft areas are always situated to the west of the residential areas. The settlement also seems to have experienced a period of urbanisation. Among the excavation units, Area G is the only one that has yielded remains of strong, wide walls bearing the characteristics of a settlement enclosure. The remains are 5.4 m long and between 0.46 m and 0.96 m thick. After the late fifteenth century, Mambrui went into decline until the next century when it lost its status as a powerful city-state. This may have been due to the arrival of the Portuguese, who chose to develop Malindi at the expense of neighbouring entrepôts.

A second issue to discuss is the discovery of imperial Chinese ceramics in Mambrui. In the first instance, we found three ceramic sherds which are likely evidence that Zheng He's renowned fifteenth-century fleet reached the eastern African coast. We found a piece of Ming Yongle (1403–1424 CE) imperial kiln blue-and-white porcelain (Figure 17.2a), and a 'Yongle Tong Bao' copper coin cast between 1403 CE and 1424 CE (Figure 17.2b). Furthermore, fragments of Hongwu (1368 CE–1398 CE) Longquan official kiln porcelain from the early Ming period have been found in Area E at Mambrui (Ding 2015). The two porcelain fragments are of special significance. Regardless of whether these objects came to Mambrui directly, or indirectly through another port, we can conclude that Mambrui played an important role in this region and on the Swahili coast at this time. Since official kiln porcelains were made exclusively for the central government or imperial family in the early fifteenth century, neither Chinese elites nor members of the general population could use them. Consequently, the most probable explanation for their presence is that Zheng He's fleet brought them as gifts from the highest reaches of the Chinese government to local rulers. They provide important evidence of communication between ruling elites.



[Figure 17.2](#) (a) Ming Yongle imperial kiln blue-and-white porcelain; (b) 'Yongle Tong Bao' copper coin

Also, the distribution of excavated Chinese ceramic sherds is concentrated in the pillar tomb area, Area A. Not only is the quantity of sherds large, but the dating of the ceramics spans a wide period. Further, there is an inverse correlation, based on the number of ceramic sherds divided by the excavation area, between the quantity of excavated Chinese ceramic sherds and the distance to Area A. In other words, the farther away from Area A, the fewer ceramic sherds would be found. This suggests that the usage of Chinese ceramics was linked to elites at the site. It is presumed that more elite people were active in the core area of any coastal settlement (Ding 2015). It has been observed that Chinese ceramics and pillar tombs occur in the same cultural layers. On the one hand, this implies that Chinese ceramics functioned as decoration for elite Swahili tombs. On the other hand, it provides clues to the functional areas in settlements and to elite activities.

Malindi

Malindi Old Town has been another important excavation site for the Chinese archaeological team. Due to restrictions imposed by existing buildings, only five units have been excavated, although surface investigations were conducted at more than 30 units across the Old Town site (Figure 17.1b). More than 500 Chinese ceramic sherds, more than 1,200 Islamic pottery sherds, and more than 70,000 local earthenware sherds have been found. It is noted that the local earthenwares include some traditional Tana Tradition/TIW fragments. In addition, we discovered a small number of glass beads, European ceramics with painted decoration, animal bone and Indian earthenwares. Samples were collected from the strata for radiocarbon dating. After analysing the imported and local ceramics, in combination with the radiocarbon results, we were able to divide the Malindi Old Town sequence into six stages.

Stage I lasted from 850 to 1000 CE. Activity was concentrated around Area B, north of the pillar-tomb mosque. Most of the artefacts are Early Tana Tradition (ETT)/TIW. Numerous human remains have also been found: 16 skeletons were discovered in Square I (5×8 m²) of Area B. The burial style suggests they were unnatural deaths and abnormally interred, seemingly during an episode of violence.

No important Islamic pottery or Chinese ceramics have been found in this period. Thereafter, Malindi Old Town seems to have been deserted, with the entire population moving elsewhere for hundreds of years. One piece of late eleventh-century Guangzhou Xicun kiln black-and-white ware was excavated in Area B. This kiln is located in the centre of Guangzhou City; first excavated in 1952, it was active in the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127 CE). Based on the proposed periodisation, the Xicun kiln sherds at Malindi could date to the second half of the eleventh century (Guangzhou Municipal Cultural Relics Management Board 1958, 1987). This could indicate that Malindi was

occupied between 1000 and 1250 CE; however, this particular sherd was found in a disturbed cultural layer. Since no other similar clearly datable artefacts been found, the settlement's circumstances between 1000 CE and 1250 CE remain unclear.

Stage II is from 1250 to 1370 CE, when Malindi Old Town was resettled and revitalised. Relics of human activity have been found across Areas A and B, the area near the shore. The number of earthenware sherds rises to some extent during this period. Some Chinese Longquan celadon and blue-and-white porcelain sherds dating to the Yuan dynasty, and Islamic sgraffiato or black-on-yellow, have been excavated. The discovery of imported ceramics indicates that this settlement became part of the Indian Ocean trading network not later than this period.

Malindi Old Town reached its peak during Stage III, between 1370 and 1520 CE, and it is at this time that Zheng He's fleet may have arrived in the Malindi area (early fifteenth century), as mentioned above. Led by Vasco da Gama, the Portuguese later landed at Malindi at the end of the fifteenth century, when the settlement extended southwards at least as far as the Portuguese chapel. Areas B and D are rich in relics, including large quantities of Chinese ceramics, especially Longquan celadon. The Islamic pottery includes sherds of sgraffiato and black-on-yellow wares. Monochrome blue-green glazed wares have also been found. A small amount of iron slag came from Area B in this period, but as yet no smelting furnaces have been found.

p.211

Stage IV began in 1520 and lasted until 1630 CE. Historians have written that Malindi city gradually declined during this period, and its neighbour Gede suddenly disappeared altogether. The Portuguese closed factories in Malindi to trade in 1512 CE. They established Fort Jesus in 1593, and Mombasa became an even more important trade base on the eastern African coast. Thereafter, the Dutch East India Company gradually replaced the Portuguese, taking control of global maritime shipping routes via the Cape of Good Hope. However, this decline has not been evident in our excavations. Although the quantity of imported Islamic pottery decreased during Stage IV, the Chinese ceramics reached a new peak. We excavated a large, elite structure (CAF 1) in Area A, outside the existing Malindi Old Town wall. The wall dimensions are similar to those of the palace remains at Gede. The wall dates from late Stage IV: early seventeenth century, and earlier than the town wall.

Stage V is from 1640 to 1861 CE, during which time the existing town wall was built. Stage VI lasts from 1861 to 1963 CE. The artefacts recovered from both periods indicate that Stages V and VI cannot be distinguished clearly from each other. Nevertheless, what is clear is that Old Town extended to Area C during Stage VI. During its peak, probably between the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the settlement covered *c.* 25–30 ha.

Due to our limited excavations in Malindi, we can discuss only some basic issues

concerning the development of the settlement. Kirkman (1964: 91) thought that the palace at the site was at the dock, near the pillar tomb. Martin (1973: 20), on the other hand, considered two possible sites for the palace, one at the present water tower and the other near the pillar tomb. We chose to excavate areas around the pillar tomb. It is certain that the population living in Malindi during the ninth and tenth centuries settled in Area B. The settlement had already expanded to Area A when it reached its second peak. According to oral history, the southern city cemetery near the Portuguese chapel could date back to the thirteenth century. It certainly existed in the fifteenth century when Malindi seems to have stretched 600 m north/south and 240 m east/west, just as Martin described. Our results indicate that sixteenth-century Old Town was clearly bounded, and consequently its development and expansion from the late thirteenth century into the sixteenth century must have been rapid. We did not find extensive house remains in Malindi, and those we did find date mostly post-fifteenth century. They indicate that houses were constructed of stone mixed with lime, corallite and mud. CAF 1 was a magnificent structure and, based on analysis of excavated strata, probably built early in the seventeenth century. It was renovated later in a new style, demonstrated by colour differences; wall remains from the early period are reddish, while from the later period they are whitish due to the presence of lime, as at the Khatibu Mosque. In both cases, the style of structure was modified during renovation. Furthermore, F1 is below the Malindi Old Town wall layer, indicating the town wall was built after the mid-seventeenth century. Historical accounts show that Malindi continued to decline from the seventeenth to mid-nineteenth century. Martin (1973: 441–7) noted that the town was abandoned in the eighteenth century; it is reported locally by archaeologists that the town wall was established in the seventeenth century, which is contrary to historical narratives (Caesar Biti, personal communication). This conclusion also indicates that Malindi was still prosperous and powerful after the middle of the seventeenth century.

While the area excavated at Malindi is smaller than that at Mambrui, the quantity of Chinese ceramic sherds is almost equal. This suggests that Malindi rose at a time when Chinese ceramics were being exported in large numbers. We can also see that the spatial distribution of Chinese ceramics in Malindi is similar to that in Mambrui. The closer the excavation comes to the pillar tomb, the greater the number of Chinese ceramic sherds discovered. In fact, the mid-Ming dynasty (mid-fifteenth to mid-sixteenth centuries), Longquan celadon sherds found at the Malindi pillar tomb suggest there may be a Swahili custom at the time to use large quantities of Chinese ceramics in building pillar tombs. Stone structures are emblematic of high social status, such that the use of Chinese ceramics may be closely linked to the activities of the elite members of society.

Conclusion

From our conclusions regarding the historical staging and development of both the Mambrui and Malindi settlements, we can see that human activity at both sites began in the ninth century. These are two of the earliest important settlements on the eastern African coast. In terms of the Chinese historical documents, however, the name 'Molin' recorded in the Chinese *Tong Dian* account may well not refer to Malindi or its surrounding areas. In light of the discovery of numerous iron artefacts in Mambrui, the 'Malindi' mentioned by al-Idrisi is more likely to be Mambrui. Mambrui and Malindi Old Town reached their heyday successively in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In terms of the archaeology, it seems there is a close relationship between the development of the two settlements and overseas trade. The expansion of the settlements attracted more foreign traders, and the development of overseas trade in turn facilitated the settlements' increased wealth. The quantity of excavated Chinese ceramic material indicates that Malindi Old Town began to play a more important role in maritime trade after the fourteenth century. As a consequence, Malindi Old Town may come to replace Mambrui as the centre of the Malindi kingdom. It was at this time, when the two settlements were flourishing, that Zheng He's fleet visited. Finally, the Portuguese chose Malindi Old Town as their first landing site, suggesting that Mambrui had declined greatly by the end of the fifteenth century.

References

- Bitá, C. 2006. *Excavations at Khatibu Mosque, Malindi: An Archaeological Impact Assessment*. Mombasa: National Museums of Kenya.
- Bitá, C. 2012. 'The origin of Malindi Town'. MA diss., University of Dar es Salaam.
- Chami, F. 1994. *The Tanzanian Coast in the First Millennium ad: An Archaeology of the Iron-Working, Farming Communities*. Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis.
- Chami, F. 1999. 'The Early Iron Age on Mafia Island and its relationship with the mainland'. *Azania* 34 (1): 1–10.
- Ding Yu. 2015. 'Archaeological research on Mambrui and Malindi in Kenya'. PhD diss., Peking University.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1962. *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the First to the Earlier Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Guangzhou Municipal Cultural Relics Management Board 1958. *Xicun Ancient Kiln Site in Guangzhou*. Guangzhou: Cultural Relics Press.
- Guangzhou Municipal Cultural Relics Management Board 1987. *Xicun Kiln in Guangzhou*. Hong Kong: Centre for Chinese Archaeology and Art of the Chinese, University of Hong Kong.
- Kirkman, J. S. 1952. 'The excavation at Kilepwa'. *Antiquaries Journal* 32: 168–84.
- Kirkman, J. S. 1954. *The Arab City of Gedi: Excavations at the Great Mosque*. Architecture and

Finds. London: Oxford University Press.

Kirkman, J. S. 1963. *Gedi, the Palace*. The Hague: Mouton.

Kirkman, J. S. 1964. *Men and Monuments on the East African Coast*. London: Lutterworth.

Laufer, B. , Du Zhengsheng , trans. 1975. *Sino-Iranica: Chinese Contributions to the History of Civilization in Ancient Iran, with Special Reference to the History of Cultivated Plants and Products* . Taipei: Taiwan Zhonghua Book Company.

p.213

Martin, E. B. 1973. *The History of Malindi*. Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau.

Pelliot, P. 2003. ‘Les grands voyages maritimes Chinois au début du 15ème siècle’. Feng Chengjun , trans. *Zheng He’s Voyage to the Western Oceans: Research on the Routes between Jiao, Guang and India* , 3–174. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.

Qin Dashu 2015. ‘Exploring the ancient kingdom of Malindi in East Africa: achievements of Peking University’s overland archaeology in Kenya ——’. In *Festschrift of Xu Guangji’s Eightieth Birthday* , edited by Festschrift of Xu Guangji’s Eightieth Birthday Editorial Board, 627–45. Beijing: Science Press.

Soper, R. 1967. ‘Kwale: an Early Iron Age site in south-eastern Kenya’. *Azania* 2: 1–17.

Su Jiqing (Ed.) 1981. *Annotations on Daoyi Zhilue* . Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.

Wilson, T. H. 1980. *The Monumental Architecture and Archaeology of the Central and Southern Kenya Coast*. Nairobi: National Museums of Kenya.

Zhang Xinglang 1977. *Compilation of Exchange History Materials between China and the West* , Vol. 2. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.

18

SHANGA

Mark Horton

The Swahili town of Shanga was the focus of intensive archaeological investigations, undertaken by the British Institute in Eastern Africa between 1980 and 1988 (Horton 1984, 1987a, 1996). Located on the south side of Pate Island in the Lamu Archipelago (Kenya) (Map 2, p. xxiii), the site has some of the best-preserved stratigraphy in eastern Africa, with an occupation spanning from the mid-eighth to the early fifteenth century. It has one of the most complete early town plans and, at its height in the fourteenth century, had a population of around 3,000 (Horton 1996: 58). Notable discoveries included the oldest known mosques in sub-Saharan Africa, the first archaeological evidence for the indigenous origins and nature of Swahili society, as well as detailed understanding of the chronology of local and imported ceramics, of fauna, particularly fish consumption, and of architectural development from timber and daub structures to coral buildings.

Shanga is mentioned in the *History of Pate* as a town that was destroyed by the second Nabhani sultan, Muhammed bin Sulaiman of Pate, whose dates were computed to 1227–1252 (Tolmacheva 1993), or the fourth Sultan Muhammed bin Ahmed (1292–1339) (Stigand 1913: 33). As the Nabhani did not rule until the sixteenth century at the earliest, this may well be an earlier event attributed to a later ruler, as the town had long been abandoned. Oral traditions recorded on Pate Island told of how the people of Shanga moved to an *mtaa* in nearby Siyu, and that these WaShanga are one of the nine clans of Siyu (Brown 1985: 74). Shanga may also be mentioned in the Arabic version of the *History of Kilwa* as ‘Shaugu’, one of the seven mythical landfalls the brothers from Shiraz reached on their way to Kilwa and the Comoros. This may indicate Shanga’s significance to emerging Islamic dynasties on the southern Swahili coast in the eleventh century (Freeman-Grenville 1962; Horton and Middleton 2000: 52). Despite its importance spanning 600 years of Swahili history, Shanga seems to have escaped notice from external sources, although, to the outside world, the topography of the coast was little known before the sixteenth century.

While limited, these historical snippets suggested that Shanga was a Swahili settlement of importance and antiquity. The initial excavations in 1980 involved the mapping of the extensive stone houses, mosques and tombs, a series of test pits to map the area and date deposits, investigations of the Friday mosque washing area, and a single sondage, 5 m², in which all deposits were sieved (for the first time on the Swahili coast) and detailed counts and analysis of the pottery undertaken. The conclusions from this early investigation were that the site was occupied continuously from the ninth century (later revised to the mid-eighth century) until the early fifteenth century, and that the Swahili character of the town had developed continuously, as had its ceramics and architecture during this 600 years (Horton 1981). The earliest levels revealed simple posthole structures, most likely circular and strongly indigenous in character. This was a stark contrast to the conclusions of Neville Chittick at the nearby site of Manda (Chittick 1984), which he believed had been founded by merchants from Siraf at the same time, intermarrying with the local Bantu-speaking population. The different 'origins' of the two sites did not, however, deter Chittick from using the local pottery-deduced sequence from Shanga to sort out his own ceramics (Chittick 1984: 108). In a review of the posthumous *Manda* publication (Chittick 1984), I was able to show that many of his conclusions were incorrect, and that Manda and Shanga were in fact very similar sites (Horton 1986).

p.215

Between 1981 and 1988, five more seasons of work took place to further elucidate the site, its spatial planning and its stratigraphy. This involved a horizontal approach, investigating the fourteenth-century town, and deep area excavations to recover the plans of buildings, quantified artefacts and ecofacts (Horton and Mudida 1993). The project worked from a basic model for the development of the site, first deduced from the plan of the stone buildings compiled in 1980 as well as the test pits (Horton 1984, 1996: 77–86). In the fifteenth-century town a central open area was visible, with the well, attached to the Friday mosque, at its middle. This well was located in a natural depression within the sand dunes (where fresh water naturally accumulates), and archaeological evidence showed that its position had not shifted since the eighth century. The open area was a central enclosure, c. 103 x 74 m, laid out at the beginning of the settlement, with the domestic areas forming a doughnut around its edges. The groups living around the edge accessed the enclosure through individual gateways (that later became streets), and seven were suggested from the plan, a possible indicator of the number of clans in the settlement. Within the enclosure itself only specialist functions took place, including trade and craft activities, burial and worship. While by the fourteenth century the enclosure walls had disappeared, remnants of this organisation were still visible in the street and house plans. Comparison was made with non-Swahili but clearly cognate *kayas* of the Mijikenda that shared many similar features (Mutoro 1987).

The area excavations crossed this enclosure line and its entrances on its east and west

sides. They largely confirmed the model, with an actual fence, later replaced by a wall, found on both sides, until the eleventh century when the formal planning seems to have partly broken down. Gateways were found on both east and west sides, and these continued as streets in the same location through 3 m of stratigraphy. Coarse beach sand was deliberately imported into the enclosure to provide a clean area. Within, the earliest buildings were all of timber and daub: initially small structures but, in the mid-ninth century, they were replaced by a massive timber hall, square in plan, 9.2 m in size. This was itself replaced in the early tenth century by square stone buildings built from undersea-quarried *Porites* coral, shaped and bonded in red mud with lime plaster facing. Two of these buildings were found on the east and west sides with likely identical plans, raised floors, entered via monumental stairs. The timber hall and stone buildings were so co-located to indicate that one succeeded the other, a succession from monumental timber to monumental stone construction. No trace of domestic use was found, although the areas around were filled with multiple timber slots, most likely kiosks for trade or craftwork. The timber/stone halls were interpreted as clan houses, semi-public buildings associated with each of the associated clan gateways.

In the early eleventh century, a significant change occurred on the site, with the robbing of the monumental *Porites* buildings, which were taken down, the area strewn with *Porites* chippings and debris and some of the materials used to burn lime. At this point the central enclosure lost its formal existence. Burial there continued, as did the streets into it, but it was also encroached by domestic buildings. The excavation of these provided an opportunity to study the development of the Swahili house. The earliest domestic buildings, from the eighth century, were built on a framework of small sticks covered in a thin daub infill. In the twelfth century, red-earth daub walls appeared, enclosing substantial earth-fast timber uprights. The buildings were rectangular, with a simple plan of three or more parallel rows of rooms with an attached courtyard that contained *mofa* ovens and ash layers. Over time these buildings became more elaborate, with up to five rows of rooms, but also greater use of coral in the daub walls, and the abandonment of internal timber uprights that seem to have rapidly rotted out. Lime plaster was used to face the walls and, by the early fourteenth century, lime replaced mud as a bonding agent for the so-called stone houses, the plan however remaining unchanged. This evidence showed that this was a gradual evolution to stone domestic architecture and that some areas of the town (a large area was excavated next to the pillar tomb) continued to build with daub and stone walls.

p.216

A major part of the project focused on the evolution of the Friday mosque, which took six seasons to complete ([Figure 18.1](#); Horton 1996: 170–223, 2004). The existing structure was dated to no later than *c.* 1000, on the basis of an absence of sgraffiato pottery in the platform sand fill of the mosque. The fill was white sand, with a large range of tenth-century ceramics and silver coins. It was a rectangular prayer hall with a capacity of *c.* 80

worshippers; it would have been entered from the west, with an eastern veranda and a southern room. The walls were in *Porites*, bonded in mud and had side pilasters ending in pillars to support a thatched roof, echoing the earlier idea of timber mosques on the coast. No evidence was found for the *mihrab* (probably removed in later changes). This mosque was burnt down and its west wall rebuilt around the time the other *Porites* buildings were destroyed in the mid-eleventh century. Over the succeeding centuries the mosque expanded, the prayer hall extended into the southern room, and an eastern courtyard and western ablution area added. The earliest surviving *mihrab* dates to *c.* 1150, and has inscriptions in foliate Kufic ([Figure 18.2](#)); it was later rebuilt around 1300.



[Figure 18.1](#) Mosque sequence revealed through excavation at Shanga



[Figure 18.2](#) Carved Porites from Shanga Friday Mosque

This was not however the first mosque at Shanga, but was built over an earlier stone mosque dating to the early tenth century and, in turn, seven earlier timber mosques spanning the late eighth to tenth century. This sequence has provided clear evidence for an Islamic community at Shanga from very close to its foundation, and the community's continuous presence until the fifteenth century. The first mosque was a small rectangular building only 4.64×2.89 m, around 12 m^2 , and would have had a capacity of around ten worshippers. The floor was silt carried from the mangroves, laid to produce a clean level surface, and the walls supported on timber posts. There was no *mihrab*, but the orientation of 310 degrees was identical to near contemporary Islamic burials excavated nearby, although some distance away from the true direction of Mecca. The second building overlying this comprised an oval spread of small pebbles, covering a similar area to the first

mosque: possibly a tent-mosque. The pebbles on the floor are also reminiscent of similar practices employed in the earliest mosques of Islam, including the first mosque of Amr in Fustat (641/2 CE), and the mosque at Basra, rebuilt by Ziyad ibn Abihi in 665 CE (Creswell 1989: 8–9).

The next succession of mosques comprised five superimposed timber buildings spanning the ninth and early tenth centuries. They had very similar characteristics of silt floor, wall trenches and timber uprights, central posts and, in one case, walls made of thin upright sticks, probably mangrove timber. The prayer-halls of each had similar proportions as the earliest mosque, broadly 2:1 or slightly less. The final timber building was the most substantial, with an eastern side room and a praying area of at least 54 m², with a capacity of over 50 worshippers. All of these mosques employed a cubit of 518 mm, a unit widely used in Umayyad architecture in the Middle East (Creswell 1989: 10).

p.218

The many artefacts from both the mosque and open-area excavations have helped to provide chronology, but also show how Shanga played its part in the origins of the Swahili. Huge quantities of both animal and fish bone were recovered, which help us to understand long-term dietary changes and different patterns across the site, including the greater consumption of fish and cattle (Horton and Mudida 1993). Considerable evidence from craft activities was recovered, as well as the presence of Indian artisans (Horton and Blurton 1988; Horton 2007). The ceramics are largely local, and the project developed a typology based around the type-variety system, termed Tana tradition. This was divided into four phases: Early, Mature, Late, and Final. Early Tana (or Triangular Incised Ware) is the characteristic pottery of the earliest Swahili settlements, and compares closely with material excavated in Tanzania of the same date, giving rise to the idea of a 'Swahili corridor' (Horton 1987b). Regional differences include the lower frequency of neck punctates, and graphite and red-slip wares (Horton 1994). The recognition of Tana tradition in the 1980s at Shanga was one of the key pieces of evidence for the indigenous origins of the Swahili. Imported pottery at Shanga averaged 5.6 per cent, but in the early levels was a slightly lower 4–5 per cent range. The full array of imports came from Southern Arabia, the Gulf, India, Southeast Asia and China. The notable Chinese wares included Changsha stoneware, the type fossil of late eighth- and early nine-century global Indian Ocean trade. Coins were entirely locally minted, largely made from silver and provide evidence for a locally converted Muslim population from the early ninth century.

Shanga was never one of the major trading centres of the Swahili coast, but there is a suggestion that it played a central part in the origins of Swahili Islam with its eighth-century mosques. The probability that Islamic practice moved down the coast from the north has long been held, and the Lamu Archipelago may have been an early area of conversion. The spread of silver coinage to Pemba (prototypes of which are found at Shanga; LaViolette, this volume) in the tenth century may well have been part of a

southward spread of Shia Islam (possibly replacing earlier Ibadi Islam in the Zanzibar Archipelago [Horton 2001, 2013]), and is partly remembered in the Shirazi traditions (Horton and Middleton 2000: 64). The violent episodes found in the archaeological record at Shanga may also point to periods of conflict and disruption linked to Islam (Qin and Ding, this volume), but remain hard to interpret in the absence of any detailed historical record. The final abandonment of the site in *c.* 1425 may well have also been as a result of such conflict, although the town may equally have exhausted the fragile water supply on which it had relied.

References

- Brown, H. 1985. 'History of Siyu: the development and decline of a Swahili town on the northern Kenyan coast'. PhD diss., Indiana University.
- Chittick, H. N. 1984. *Manda: Excavations at an Island Port on the Kenya Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Creswell, K. A. C. 1989. *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture* (rev. edn. with J. W. Allan). Aldershot: Scholar Press.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1962. *The Medieval History of the Coast of Tanganyika, with Special Reference to Recent Archaeological Discoveries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Horton, M. C. 1981. *Shanga 1980: An Interim Report*. National Museums of Kenya.
- Horton, M. 1984. 'The early settlement of the northern Swahili coast'. PhD diss., University of Cambridge.
- Horton, M. 1986. 'Asiatic colonization of the East African coast: the Manda evidence'. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2: 201–13.
- Horton, M. C. 1987a. 'Early Muslim trading settlements on the East African coast: new evidence from Shanga'. *Antiquaries Journal* 67 (2): 290–323.
- Horton, M. 1987b. 'The Swahili corridor'. *Scientific American* 257 (3): 86–93.
- Horton, M. 1994. 'Closing the corridor: archaeological and architectural evidence for emerging Swahili regional autonomy'. In *Continuity and Autonomy in Swahili Societies*, edited by D. Parkin, 15–21. London: SOAS.
- Horton, M. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. 2001. 'The Islamic conversion of the Swahili coast 750–1500: some archaeological and historical evidence'. In *Islam in East Africa: New Sources*, edited by B. S. Amoretti, 449–69. Rome: Herda.
- Horton, M. 2004. 'Islam, archaeology and Swahili identity'. In *Changing Social Identity with*

- the Spread of Islam: Archaeological Perspectives*, edited by D. Whitcomb, 67–88. Chicago: Oriental Institute Seminar No. 1.
- Horton, M. 2007. 'Artisans, communities and commodities: medieval exchanges between northwestern India and East Africa'. *Ars Orientalis* 34: 64–83.
- Horton, M. 2013. 'Ibadis in East Africa: archaeological and historical evidence'. In *Oman and Overseas*, edited by M. Hoffmann-Ruf, A. al-Salimi and H. Gaube, 93–106. Tübingen: OLMS.
- Horton M. C. and Blurton, T. R. 1988. "'Indian" metalwork in East Africa: the bronze lion statuette from Shanga'. *Antiquity* 62 (234): 11–23.
- Horton, M. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Horton, M. and Mudida, N. 1993. 'Exploitation of marine resources: evidence for the origins of the Swahili communities of East Africa'. In *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns*, edited by T. Shaw, P. Sinclair, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, 673–93. London: Routledge.
- Mutoro, H. W. 1987. 'An archaeological study of the Mijikenda *Kaya* settlements on the hinterland of the Kenya coast'. PhD diss., University of California Los Angeles.
- Stigand, C. 1913. *The Land of Zinj: Being an Account of British East Africa, Its Ancient History and Present Inhabitants*. London: Constable.
- Tolmacheva, M. 1993. *The Pate Chronicle: Edited and Translated from Mss 177, 321 & 358 of the Library of the University of Dar es Salaam*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

19

GEDE

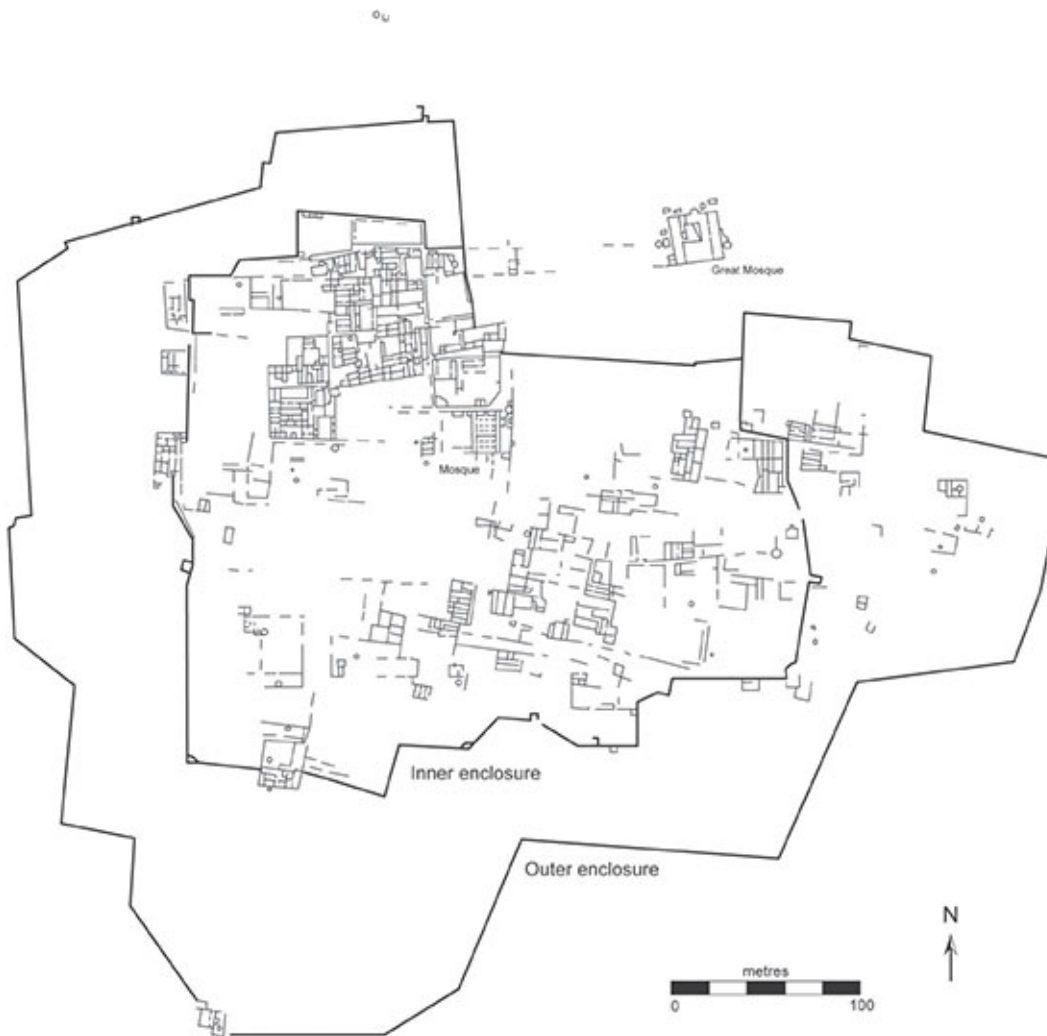
Matthew Pawlowicz

Gede is among the best-known Swahili sites, located a few kilometres inland on the southern Kenya coast between Mombasa and Malindi (Map 1, p. xxii). It is rightly famous for its extensive and well-preserved ruins, which have been protected by the Kenyan government as a national monument since 1948. These ruins are enclosed in a forest considered a sacred site by the surrounding community and used for traditional rituals (NMK 2015; see also Prins 1952: 47). Owing to their preservation and ongoing local significance, the ruins have attracted archaeological attention from the mid-twentieth century. Because of the relatively long history of archaeological work at the site, Gede has been studied by researchers operating under several different paradigms. This variety of perspectives has produced a rich understanding of the settlement and of the broader coast, even as it points to evolving Swahili historiography.

Gede's inhabitants participated in the broader Swahili culture of the eastern African coast. The town was occupied between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries CE, with a peak in the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries (Pradines 2010), falling squarely within the Swahili cultural florescence. At the same time, Gede represents a particular type of Swahili site: smaller and seemingly less powerful than its neighbours Malindi and Mombasa and not located directly on the ocean, yet wealthy and benefitting from Indian Ocean trade. It was absent from the Portuguese sources, yet has endured in the memories of the inhabitants of this part of the coast. Studying Gede's archaeology thus offers particular kinds of insight into Swahili history. Much of the early archaeological work there investigated its considerable standing architecture, excavating the mosques and stone-houses inside the town walls ([Figure 19.1](#)). Such work, as elsewhere on the coast, privileged the town's merchant elite. More recently, research extended the focus to earlier time periods and other segments of the population, including those who lived outside the town walls. This chapter aims to provide an overview of the insights yielded by each approach.

Kirkman's mid-twentieth century excavations

p.221

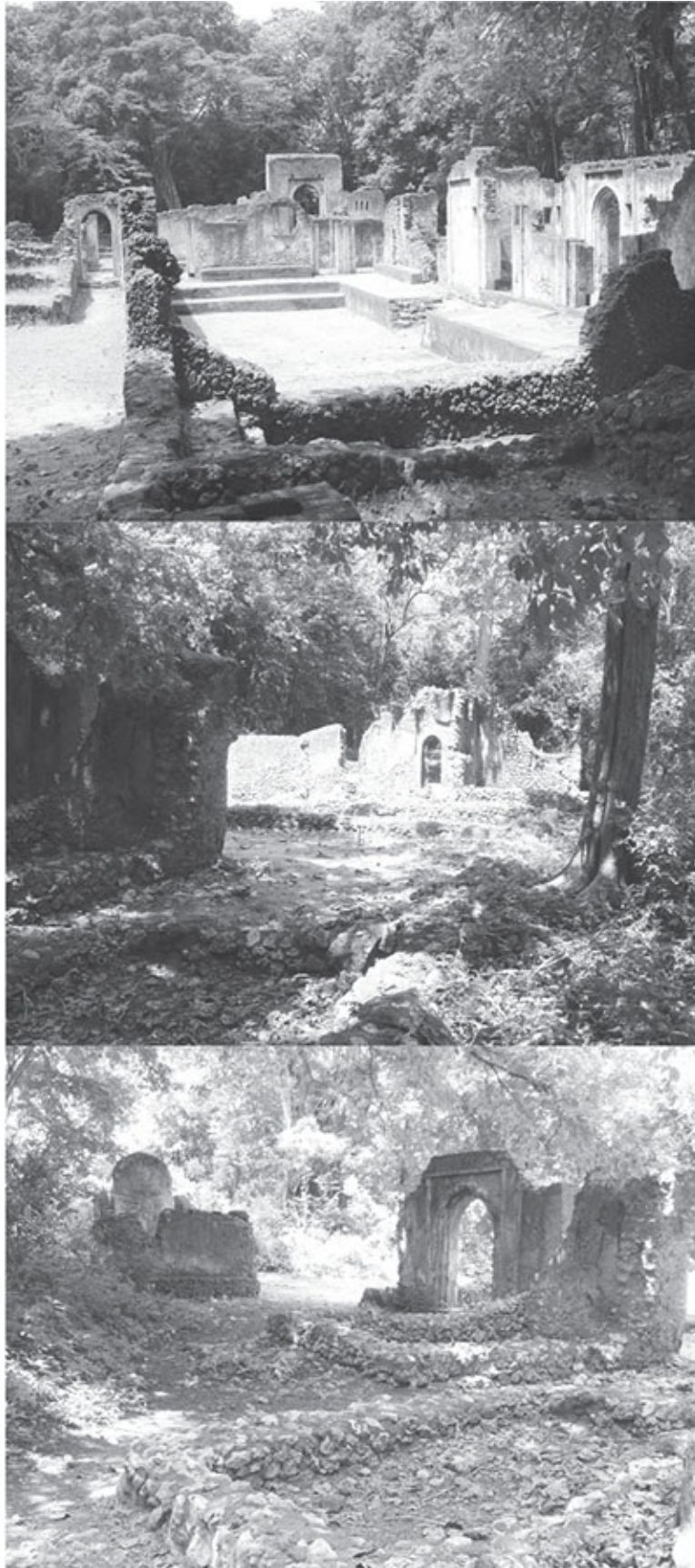


[Figure 19.1](#) Plan of Gede, showing shape of enclosure walls to northeast, suggesting possible earlier enclosure (Based on Pradines 2004, figure 72, p. 119, reproduced with permission of Oxbow Publishing)

The first professional archaeological investigations at Gede – the first excavations of a Swahili site anywhere on the coast – were conducted by James Kirkman over a decade beginning in 1948. Kirkman's primary focus was describing the site's standing-stone architecture ([Figure 19.2](#)), especially the Great Friday Mosque and multi-room structure he called the Palace, which he reported in a series of publications (for example, 1954, 1960, 1963). Kirkman was able to describe three phases of construction for the Great Mosque, dating to the mid-fifteenth, early sixteenth and mid-sixteenth centuries (Kirkman 1954: 14). The Palace similarly was described as expanding to its current area of c. 2000 sq. m in three stages over the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Kirkman 1963: 11–

12), pointing to shifting socio-economic and political circumstances for Gede's elite. From this evidence, Kirkman (1963: 12) suggested a link between building apartments or tenements during the third phase of construction and the decline in the fortunes of the Sheik of Malindi, assumed to have held political control of the town. More generally, Kirkman described the overall structure of the stone-built portion of Gede inside its two town walls and suggested common features of the elite private residences within those walls.

In addition to this substantial achievement regarding the site's architecture, Kirkman was able to provide a material culture sequence. While the Palace and Great Friday Mosque were constructed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, he recorded evidence for earlier occupation of the site, as he recovered two Chinese coins and a variety of imported ceramics dating to the twelfth and early-thirteenth centuries from the lower levels of excavations (Kirkman 1954: 12–13). While Kirkman's dating was primarily derived from imports, a pattern that held true for many subsequent works on the coast, he was able to correlate that chronology with patterns in the more abundant local ceramics. Ultimately he described 40 types of locally produced jars, cooking-pots and eating-bowls, whose forms he suggested 'did not extend beyond the demands of the kitchen' (Kirkman 1954: 71). Among those types a number of trends stand out, including the late adoption of wheel-thrown pottery and the relative prevalence of red-ochre coated and burnished wares until the mid-sixteenth century. Kirkman further remarked on the limited numbers and range of decorated local ceramics throughout his excavations. Nonetheless, the presence of pots with applied rib decorations in the levels before the fifteenth century, as well as a social distinction between incised forms and those with fingernail decoration, calls for attention.



[*Figure 19.2*](#) The Palace, Kirkman's Friday Mosque, and tombs

Kirkman's work at Gede thus made a substantial contribution towards the founding of

Swahili archaeology, though the paradigm under which he interpreted this wealth of evidence bears comment. Kirkman believed Gede to have been built by Arab immigrants to the coast, as was widely assumed by British researchers for the whole of Swahili society and further attested by Swahili groups at the time. This belief is clear from the title of his first monograph, *The Arab City of Gedi* (1954), but it is also visible in his explanations of the material culture distinctions between the ‘pre-mosque levels’ and those that came afterward. Certainly we do well to note the significant influence of Middle-Eastern Islamic culture on Gede, but Kirkman’s assumption of an Arab founding, marked by the construction of the mosque, caused him to miss both the ongoing cultural contributions of African groups and the influence of Middle-Eastern society in earlier levels.

Pradines’ revisiting of the stone-built core

Swahili archaeology and historiography progressed substantially in the decades following Kirkman’s pioneering work, and so Stéphane Pradines returned to the site some 50 years later, from 1999 to 2003 (Pradines 2010). The goal of Pradines’ study of Gede was to supplement and refine knowledge from Kirkman’s excavations, with emphasis on the foundation of the site and yet unstudied areas. This focus brought particular attention to the earlier centuries of the site’s occupation as Pradines sought to understand the chronology of urban development at Gede.

p.223

The most notable finding from Pradines’ work was an earlier Friday Mosque northeast of the city wall. Its earliest stage of construction was in the twelfth century, and at its greatest extent the mosque was larger, at 26 m long, than the Great Mosque documented by Kirkman (Pradines 2000)¹. This early mosque was the focus for the growing town of Gede during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, before the centre shifted south and west to areas later enclosed by the town wall. Pradines’ work (2010) enabled him to construct a chronology that filled in gaps in Kirkman’s work regarding the early centuries of the site. In the new chronology the town began as a village connected to the ocean by Mida Creek in the eleventh century and then grew around the early mosque in the twelfth. It doubled in size during the thirteenth century and reached its largest extent of 34 ha during the fourteenth century. Gede experienced a significant change in the fifteenth century, with the construction of a new Friday Mosque (that documented by Kirkman) and hundreds of stone houses – the remains of which are still visible – as the centre of town moved away from the old mosque to the southwest. Finally, in the mid-sixteenth century, the town contracted, as evidenced by the construction of a smaller town wall, and caused perhaps by shifts in the Sabaki River.

Pradines (2000: 23–4) was able to address other important issues. His exploration of the

early mosque, its associated burials, and the ‘necropolis’ located at the southern margins of the site, enabled him to speak about the town’s ritual and burial practices. He addressed questions of domestic architecture, analysing house forms across the centuries of the site’s occupation and suggesting a significant shift in form at the beginning of the fifteenth century (Pradines 2010, 2013). He explored daily life in the centre of town, providing important details of diet and trade.

Pradines was thus able to extend our knowledge of Gede from Kirkman’s work in a number of important ways. He emphasised enduring African cultural elements even among periods of substantial foreign influence. At the same time, he recognised ‘a binary division between the stone-town and the city of earth, that is to say a geographical separation between the rich, wa-Ungwana, and the poor, wa-Zalia’ (2010: 162). While he showed that much new information could be gleaned from the elite portions of the site, the very existence of that separation indicated that work remained to be done, to better understand the lives and contributions of Gede’s non-elite inhabitants.

Koplin and the democratisation of Gede’s archaeology

A third project, contemporary with Pradines’ work, was initiated by Lynn Koplin to address those issues: seeking a better understanding of the lives of Gede’s non-elite inhabitants and going beyond the elite/non-elite dichotomy to look at variability in the lives of people living in earth-and-thatch housing at Gede. She initiated a program of systematic intra-site survey to recover evidence of earthen structures and loci of craft specialisation, and excavated ten trenches in the most promising locations to explore those issues. These efforts produced a great quantity of material, including more than 80,000 sherds of local ceramics, 1,200 imported sherds, nearly 30 kg of faunal remains, 758 beads, and hundreds of artefacts of glass, metal and stone (Koplin and LaViolette 2008). Unfortunately, the full results of these excavations were not published. However, I have recently been able to access Koplin’s notes and examine the material culture from her work archived at the Fort Jesus museum in Mombasa, so I am able to provide an overview of Koplin’s major results (see also Pawlowicz 2014).

p.224

Koplin’s survey was conducted on a 50 m grid that covered areas both within and outside the town walls. Importantly, the survey identified spatial variability in several different aspects of material culture. The distribution of local ceramics and animal bone suggested locations of communal deposition to the west and northeast of the town walls. Concentrations of slag just southwest and east of the walls and an extreme concentration of shell beads in the eastern part of the site pointed to areas of specialised, spatially restricted production. Overall, the imported ceramics recovered by the survey concentrated

within the stone-walled portion of the site, following the elite/commoner distinction. However, individual kinds of imports clustered in different areas, including outside the town walls in some cases (Pawlowicz 2014). For instance, while celadons were common throughout the walled area, monochromes were especially concentrated towards the southwest; blue-on-white porcelain was found primarily within the eastern portion enclosed by the town walls. This evidence suggests differential access to certain kinds of ceramics, with implications for the nature of interregional trade conducted at Gede and gradations of wealth among its inhabitants. There is also an intriguing temporal component, as black-on-yellow and sgraffiato ceramics from earlier in the second millennium are concentrated outside the walled area of the site to the northeast, in line with Pradines' (2010) findings of an earlier town core in that area.

[*Table 19.1*](#) Imported ceramic information from Koplin's trenches at Gede

Unit	<i>Local pottery</i>	<i>Import ratio</i>	<i>% decorated</i>	<i>% Celadon</i>	<i>% B-W Porcelain</i>	<i>% Black-on-Yellow</i>	<i>% Monochrome</i>	
A	7,359	1.45	2.0%	43.9%	0.0%	1.9%	40.2%	Plaster and daub present
B	4,847	1.01	1.5%	16.3%	14.3%	10.2%	51.0%	Plaster and daub in sediments; encounter coral limestone bedrock
C	4,021	2.19	2.4%	8.0%	44.3%	1.1%	26.1%	Stopped after encountering burial
D	15,953	1.05	2.3%	11.3%	0.6%	1.2%	74.4%	Contains multiple floor levels
E	2,646	4.61	1.6%	31.1%	5.7%	9.8%	27.0%	Encounter daub pavement, floor levels, rock concentrations
F	12,035	1.06	1.7%	26.0%	5.5%	0.0%	48.8%	Plaster and daub in sediments; stopped after encountering burial
G	2,050	2.44	3.0%	28.0%	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%	Yields daub and plaster concentrations; likely floor level
H	7,478	2.31	2.0%	31.8%	3.5%	6.9%	27.7%	Daub in sediments; stopped after encountering burial
J	6,431	1.12	1.6%	20.8%	12.5%	25.0%	30.6%	Plaster concentrations, likely floor level
K	4,037	1.31	1.3%	24.5%	1.9%	7.5%	50.9%	Plaster concentrations, but no obvious floor levels
<i>All</i>	<i>66,857</i>	<i>1.51</i>	<i>1.9%</i>	<i>24.7%</i>	<i>7.6%</i>	<i>8.5%</i>	<i>40.4%</i>	

The ten 2 × 2 m trenches excavated by Koplin were located within presumed earth-and-thatch neighbourhoods both inside and outside the town walls. While all of the trenches yielded daub and plaster, four units showed evidence for earthen floors. Three other units were closed after encountering burials. These results show that she was able to identify earth-and-thatch occupations. Perhaps the most important insight from the trenches was that wealth differentiation existed in the earthen neighbourhoods, in addition to differences from the elites living in the stone houses. There was significant

variation in the proportions and kinds of imports found in the units with earthen floors ([Table 19.1](#); Units D, E, G and J) and, while the prevalence of Black-on-Yellow pottery in Unit G suggests it is earlier, the other three structures are roughly contemporary. Similar variability can be seen in diet. While all of the town's non-elite residents relied on fish for protein – notable as the town is 4 km from the ocean – that reliance was less pronounced in the wealthier earth-and-thatch neighbourhoods, where residents had more frequent access to cows, sheep and goats. Poorer residents were also more likely to utilise shellfish and wild fauna such as duiker, and a greater prevalence of rats perhaps indicates less sanitary living conditions.

p.225

Summary

Taken together, these three projects provide important insights into Gede's history that also have bearing elsewhere on the coast. Kirkman's ground-breaking work detailed some of the Islamic, Middle Eastern cultural influences on medieval Swahili society and suggested patterns for Swahili material culture, such as the late adoption of wheel-thrown pottery, that have borne out in comparison with other Swahili sites. Pradines captured the implications of recognising the African origins of Swahili society as he explored urban trajectories for Gede and the rest of the coast. Koplin included the town's entire population in her approach, enabling recognition of internal differences and the local forces shaping Gede's involvement in larger coastal networks. In so doing, all the work reflects broad trends in Swahili historiography, and demonstrates the nuanced understanding of coastal sites that is possible when insights from a variety of approaches are considered.

Note

- ¹ This has also led to the confusing situation where two different mosques are referred to as 'the Great Friday Mosque' in publications, depending on the author.

References

- Kirkman, J. 1954. *The Arab City of Gedi: Excavations at the Great Mosque, Architecture and Finds*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kirkman, J. 1960. *The Tomb of the Dated Inscription at Gedi*. London: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Occasional Paper 14.

- Kirkman, J. 1963. *Gedi: The Palace*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Koplin, L. and LaViolette, A. 2008. *Archaeology of Swahili Social Differentiation: Excavation of Earth-and-Thatch Neighbourhoods at Gede, Kenya, 11th–16th Centuries ad*. Nairobi: report submitted to the National Museums of Kenya.
- National Museums of Kenya (NMK). Gede: historical background. Available online at: <http://www.museums.or.ke/content/blogcategory/22/28/> (last accessed 1 Oct 2015).
- Pawlowicz, M. 2014. 'New insights on Swahili culture from old data: the case of Gede, Kenya'. Paper given at the 22nd Biennial Meeting of the Society of Africanist Archaeologists, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Pradines, S. 2000. 'Nouvelles recherches archéologiques sur le site de Gedi (Kenya, Mission de Juillet-Août 1999)'. *Nyame Akuma* 53: 22–8.
- Pradines, S. 2004. *Fortifications et Urbanisation en Afrique Orientale*. Oxford: Archaeopress, Cambridge Monographs in African Archaeology 58.
- Pradines, S. 2010. *Gedi, une Cite Portuaire Swahilie: Islam Medieval en Afrique Orientale*. Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire.
- Pradines, S. 2013. 'Swahili archaeology'. In *Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology*, edited by C. Smith, 7162–73. New York: Springer.
- Prins, A. H. J. 1952. *Coastal Tribes of the North-Eastern Bantu*. London: International African Institute.

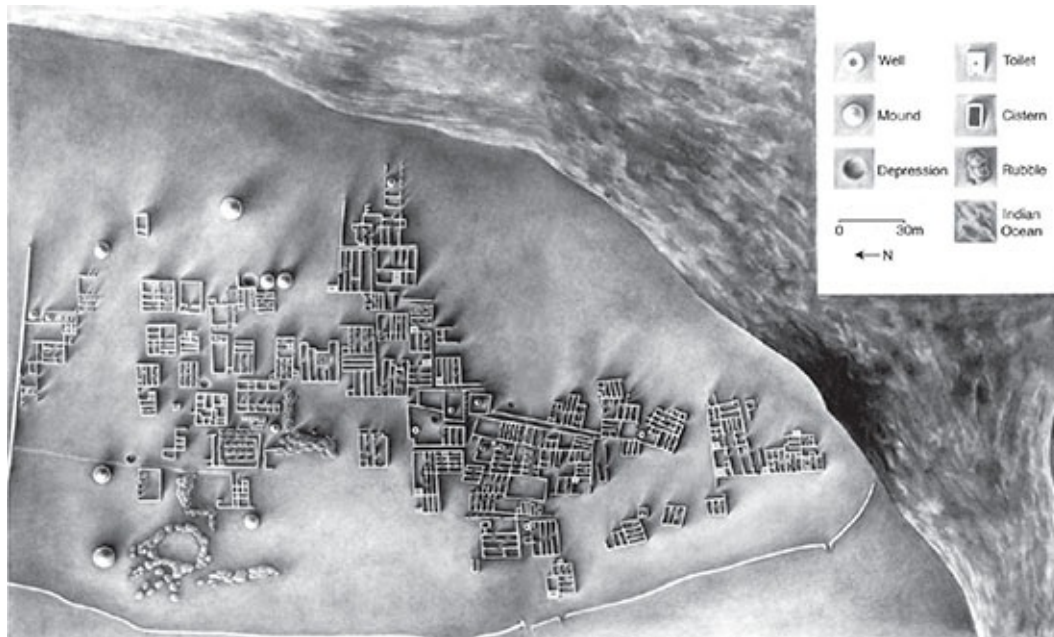
20

MTWAPA

*Chapurukha M. Kusimba, Sloan R. Williams, Janet M. Monge,
Mohamed Mchulla Mohamed, Rahul Oka, Gilbert Oteyo, Sibel B.
Kusimba and Laure Dussubieux*

Introduction

The ancient town of Mtwapa is located on the Mtwapa Creek some 15 km north of Mombasa, Kenya ([Figure 20.1](#)). It was first reported by Emery (1824–6; Gray 1957: 61) when he visited it in 1824. The present site consists of five mosques and 64 houses, as well as undetermined structures, possible commercial houses and wells (Kusimba 1993). The stonetown section of Mtwapa covered approximately 8 ha, out of which four still contain standing architecture. We have surveyed, mapped and excavated 15 trenches at nine localities and two cemeteries at Mtwapa since 1986. More than 70 radiocarbon dates from the site span the period 1732 bce to 1750 CE, when Mtwapa was abandoned (Kusimba *et al.* 2013).



[*Figure 20.1*](#) Map of Mtwapa

Residential structures at Mtwapa range from mud structures mostly located outside the perimeter wall to stone houses of varying degrees of size and materials, portraying a city differentiated by wealth. Differences in household wealth are distinctly displayed in the divide between the stonetown and wattle-and-daub neighbourhoods outside the stonetown. The stonetown itself shows significant class differences.

p.227

Archaeological excavations recovered large volumes of diverse artefacts typical of urban society. The finds include local and trade ceramics, iron and iron slag, rock crystal, spindle whorls, glass, marine and Indo-pacific beads, and reveal a complex hierarchical urban polity with a thriving domestic, regional and international economy. The ubiquitous local pottery belongs to the Tana Tradition (Abungu 1990; Horton 1996; Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2011). Mtwapa's pottery was probably produced at the household level by potters who exploited clay sources located upstream along the creek. The diverse yet conservative forms, styles and decorative motifs of local pottery point to habits and traditions in food production dominated by boiling, stewing and, only secondarily, baking (Haaland 1997). From its origins as a small seasonal camp in *c.* 1732 bce to its abandonment *c.* 1750 CE, Mtwapa residents overwhelmingly consumed marine resources, including shell, shallow and deep-sea fishes and molluscs. This is supported by Mtwapa's excavation data, dominated by marine fauna throughout the town's existence.

The domestic economy

The overwhelming majority of artefacts at Mtwapa reflect the domestic economy. Spindle

whorls, bead grinders, rock crystal cores and smithing slags point to a domestic economy not unlike that exhibited in similar towns. The absence of clearly identifiable workshops favours the notion that production was primarily carried out at the household level, raising the possibility that small-scale family and/or extended family-run cottage workshops were normally situated in residential compounds (Wynne-Jones 2013). Even blacksmiths carried out their activities within the stonetown and not in separate zones. The local weaving industry was also actively pursued in nearly all households. Ubiquitous bead grinders point to an active industry dedicated to the making and trading of marine shell beads (Flexner *et al.* 2008). Locally made marine shell and ostrich eggshell beads constitute nearly 90 per cent of the bead assemblage in all periods. Their production continued well into the sixteenth-century period of Portuguese influence. When these data sets are not reported in publications they have the unintended consequence of privileging non-local economies (Wood 2000, 2012).

Our data point to a strong possibility that crafts made in the household or family workshop were sold or bartered from the owner's 'shop' or at rotating markets, which extended into the interior as illustrated by the recovery of marine beads and glass beads from 12th-century contexts at sites in Kasigau.

Indian Ocean connections: beads and trade ceramics

Imported goods at Mtwapa point to integration into global networks of trade and connection. Glass beads, imported ceramics and jewellery found at Mtwapa are comparable with those at other Swahili sites. The large quantity of glazed monochrome wares at Mtwapa suggest that here, as elsewhere, merchants from Southwest Asia – the Persian Gulf and Red Sea – commanded a large share of overseas trade. Early settlement at Mtwapa was local in character, with external trade developing from the ninth century CE, intensifying at the end of the fifteenth century. Increasing Portuguese influence from the sixteenth century is visible in a shift towards South Asian, primarily Gujarati, imports (Oka 2008; Oka *et al.* 2009).

The origins of specific trade ceramics have remained problematic but this is beginning to change as more intensive macro- and micro-analytical studies become available (Kennett 2004; Oka 2008; Oka *et al.* 2009; Zhu *et al.* 2015). Imported glass beads, which constituted only 10 per cent of the total beads recovered at Mtwapa, were Indo-Pacific beads (Dussubieux *et al.* 2008; Francis 1994). LA ICP-MS analysis of a representative sample showed that the bulk of Mtwapa glass beads were made in India, possibly from the ancient city of Chaul in Maharashtra, which was the second most important city controlled by the Portuguese after Kolkata during the Portuguese era (Dussubieux *et al.* 2008; Wood *et al.* 2012).

Recent discoveries of monochrome production kilns at Lashkarshah in the Gulf of Khambat, Gujarat in India revealed multiple production sources for glazed wares commonly referred to as Islamic monochromes outside the Islamic core. Elemental analysis of a sample of 42 sherds of glazed monochromes excavated from fifteenth to seventeenth century contexts at Mtwapa showed that all but one were made in South Asia, rather than the Persian Gulf (Kusimba 1993, 1999; Oka 2008; Oka *et al.* 2009). LA-ICP-MS analysis demonstrated clear distinctions between ceramics made in South Asia and those made in Southwest Asia/North Africa in both the major and minor/trace element concentrations in the glaze.

These results contradict current understandings that credit production of Monochrome Glazed Wares exclusively to Southwest Asian and North African kilns. That 98 per cent of the Mtwapa collection can reliably be sourced to Lashkarshah points to a major economic and political shift in Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf commerce beginning from the sixteenth century (Oka 2008).

Conclusions

Mtwapa's evolution into an urban port town was the outcome of economic interactions both with the hinterland and across the Indian Ocean. These relationships involved the building of a complex web of mutually beneficial partnerships. The residents developed a vibrant domestic economy based on bead-making, weaving, salt-making and fishing, which they exchanged or bartered with their hinterland counterparts for grains, ivory, rhinoceros horn and iron bloom among other products. They would exchange these products with Asian merchants for ceramics, porcelain, silk, beads and numerous other imports, some of like beads were further exchanged inland (Kusimba 2008; Wright 2005; Walz 2010; see also Walz, this volume). Contrary to perspectives that tend to place the evolution of a strictly maritime culture in the second millennium CE, our work at Mtwapa shows that the foundation of these societies drew from deliberate harnessing of locally available maritime resources and building reciprocal networks of exchange with the hinterland and overseas that began much earlier in the first millennium.

Acknowledgements

Chapurukha M. Kusimba's research in Kenya has been generously been supported by the National Museums of Kenya and the Republic of Kenya through research permits and excavation permits: 0P/13/001/25C 86; MHE & T 13/001/35C264, and NCST/5/C/002/E/543. The bulk of the research reported here was carried out when

Chapurukha was at the Field Museum of Natural History and University of Illinois-Chicago. Generous financial support from the US National Science Foundation SBR 9024683 (1991–3); BCS 9615291 (1996–8); BCS 0106664 (2002–04); BCS 0352681 (2003–04); BCS 0648762 (2007–09; BCS-1030081 (2010–12), the US IIE J. W. Fulbright Sr. Scholars Program 2002–3, 2012), National Geographic Society (1996–7), Wenner-Gren Foundation (1991), and the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland (1991) have enabled Chapurukha and his colleagues to conduct research in Kenya. Chapurukha wishes to thank Dr George H. O. Abungu, Dr Idle Farah, Dr Purity Kiura, Dr Mzalendo Kibunjia, Ms Angela Kabiru, the late Dr Richard F. Wilding, the late Vernon Colpoys, the late Benson Odeny-Obul, the late Kaingu Kalume Timga, Ali Abubakr, Ahmed Sheikh Nabhany, and the Mchulla family in Mombasa, Lamu and Faza for their unwavering support over the years.

p.229

References

- Abungu, G. H. O. 1990. 'Communities on the River Tana, Kenya: an archaeological study of relations between the delta and the river basin, 700–1890 ad'. PhD diss., Cambridge University.
- Chittick, H. N. 1977. 'The East Coast, Madagascar, and the Indian Ocean'. In *The Cambridge History of Africa*, edited by Roland Oliver, 3: 183–231. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dussubieux, L., Kusimba, C. M., Gogte, V., Kusimba, S. B., Gratuze, B. and Oka, R. 2008. 'The trading of ancient glass beads: new analytical data from South Asian and East African soda-alumina glass beads'. *Archaeometry* 50: 797–821, doi:10.1111/j.1475-4754.2007.00350.x.
- Emery, J. B. 1883. 'A short account of Mombasa and neighbouring coast of Africa'. *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* 280–2.
- Fleisher, J. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2011. 'Ceramics and the early Swahili: deconstructing the Early Tana Tradition'. *African Archaeological Review* 28 (4): 245–78.
- Flexner, J. L., Fleisher, J. B. and LaViolette, A. 2008. 'Bead grinders and early Swahili household economy: analysis of an assemblage from Tumbe, Pemba Island, Tanzania, 7th–10th centuries ad'. *Journal of African Archaeology* 6 (2): 161–81.
- Francis, P. Jr., 1994. 'Glass beads in Asia, part two: Indo-Pacific beads'. *Asian Perspectives* 29 (1): 1–23.
- Garlake, P. 1966. *The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast*. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Gray, J. M. 1957. *The British in Mombasa, 1824–1826*. London: Macmillan.

- Haaland, R. 1997. 'Emergence of sedentism: new ways of living, new ways of symbolizing'. *Antiquity*, 71 (272): 374.
- Horton, M. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Kennett, D. 2004. *Sasanian and Islamic Pottery from Ras al-Khaimah: Classification, Chronology and Analysis of Trade in the Western Indian Ocean* (eBook version). Oxford: Archaeopress, Society for Arabian Studies Monographs 1.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1993. 'The archaeology and ethnography of iron metallurgy of the Kenya coast.' PhD diss., Bryn Mawr College.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1999. *The Rise and Fall of Swahili States*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- Kusimba, C. 2008. 'Early African cities: their role in the shaping of urban and rural interaction spheres'. In *The Ancient City: New Perspectives on Urbanism in the Old and New World*, edited by J. Marcus and J. Sabloff, 229–46. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press.
- Kusimba, C. M., Kusimba, S. B. and Dussubieux, L. 2013. 'Beyond the coastalscapes: preindustrial social and political networks in East Africa'. *African Archaeological Review* 30 (8): 399–426.
- Oka, R. C. 2008. 'Resilience and adaptation of trade networks in East Africa and South Asian port polities, 1500–1800 CE'. PhD diss., University of Illinois at Chicago.
- Oka, R. C., Dussubieux, L., Kusimba, C. M. and Vishwas, G. 2009. 'The impact of "imitation" industries and imperial restrictions on Chinese ceramic commercial exports in the Indian Ocean maritime exchange, ca. 1200–1700 CE'. In *Proceedings of the Fourth Forbes Symposium on Scientific Research in the Field of Asian Art*, 27 to 29 September, Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution.
- Walz, J. R. 2010. 'Route to a regional past: an archaeology of the lower Pangani (Ruvu) basin, Tanzania, 500–1900 CE'. PhD diss., University of Florida.
- Wood, M. 2000. 'Making connections: relationships between international trade and glass beads from the Shashe–Limpopo Area'. In *African Naissance: the Limpopo Valley 1000 Years Ago*, edited by M. Lesley and T. Maggs, 78–90. Vlaeberg: South African Archaeological Society.
- Wood, M. 2012. *Interconnections: Glass Beads and Trade in Southern and Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean, 7th to 16th centuries ad*. Uppsala: Department of Archaeology and Ancient History.
- Wood, M., Dussubieux, L. and Robertshaw, P. 2012. 'Glass finds from Chibuene, a 6th to 17th-century AD port in southern Mozambique'. *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 67 (195): 87–99.
- Wright, D. K. 2005. 'New perspectives on early regional interaction networks of East

African trade: a view from Tsavo National Park, Kenya'. *African Archaeological Review* 22 (3): 111–40.

Wynne-Jones, S. 2013. 'The public life of the Swahili stonehouse'. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*, 32: 759–73.

Zhu, T., Ding, X., Kusimba, C. M. and Feng, Z. 2015. 'Using laser ablation inductively coupled plasma mass spectroscopy (LA-ICP-MS) to determine the provenance of the cobalt pigment of Qinghua porcelain from Jingdezhen in Yuan Dynasty of China (1271–1368 AD)'. *Ceramics International* 41 (8): 9878–84.

21

PEMBA ISLAND, c. 1000–1500 CE

Adria LaViolette

Introduction

Pemba Island, 50 km off the northern Tanzanian coast and a similar distance north of Zanzibar, was a Swahili heartland from the mid-first millennium CE. Today it is predominantly rural and in the economic shadow of Zanzibar, belying its second-millennium urban settlement system, supported by a verdant landscape, many deep inlets and resources provided by mangrove forests, reefs and the Pemba Channel (Lane and Breen, this volume). Early success was based on mixed agricultural/fishing villages, among which Tumbe emerged to prominence on Pemba and the late first-millennium coast (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013; Fleisher, ‘Tumbe’, this volume). In the early second millennium, we see a shift to stonetown polities, absorbing a large proportion of rural dwellers into their growth (Fleisher 2010a, ‘Town’, this volume). This urbanisation aligns with broader coastal transformations yet was particularly vibrant here until the sixteenth century. In the fourteenth–fifteenth centuries, for example, some 15 contemporaneous settlements with stone architecture ringed the island; many were smaller earth-and-thatch settlements with a single stone mosque or tomb. At least five settlements were larger, with stone houses, mosques and tombs plus numerous earth and timber structures – Mtambwe Mkuu, Ras Mkumbuu, Mkia wa Ngombe, Chwaka, Pujini – but many of the smaller settlements with even one stone building were around for many centuries, not to mention all the village settlements. It is notable that in the late fifteenth/early sixteenth centuries, Portuguese sources observed five sultanates or kingdoms on Pemba (Barbosa in Freeman-Grenville 1981: 133).

What can we make of this density and diversity in the second millennium? Here I offer a perspective based on Pemban culture history on the one hand, but also the ways in which people and settlements on Pemba were tied to diverse places elsewhere on the coast and beyond; we can imagine Pemba as the hub of a wheel that inscribed a complex set of interregional interactions. After an overview of archaeological research to date, I discuss

four larger settlements – Mtambwe Mkuu, Ras Mkumbuu, Chwaka, and Pujini – that underscore Pemba’s rich archaeology, diversity and connectivity spanning c. 1000–1500 CE (Map 3, p. xxiv).

Review of research

Research began nearly a century ago, as British colonial officers including F. B. Pearce (1920), W. H. Ingrams (1931), and L. A. C. Buchanan (1932) explored many standing ruins with romantic flare; to them the ruins were proof of prior waves of Orientalist colonisation. Although their digging was quite destructive (some objects are curated at the Victoria and Albert Museum), their observations have been useful due to extensive changes since. Professional exploration began with James Kirkman (1959) at Ras Mkumbuu, followed by Peter Garlake’s (1966) inclusion of select structures in his Islamic architecture survey. Since the 1980s the pace of study quickened as coastal settlements were recast from Arab/Persian colonies to indigenous ones. Horton and Clark’s (1985) survey of sites on Pemba and Zanzibar with standing structures provided a baseline for a new culture history and preservation efforts. Many of the sites they located have been the subject of excavations (LaViolette 1989, 1996, 2000; Horton in press), along with numerous further sites identified through systematic survey across northern Pemba (Fleisher 2003; Fleisher and LaViolette 2013). In addition, Pemba has been the setting for the first archaeobotanical research into coastal subsistence strategies (Walshaw 2010, 2015), later put into environmental context (Stoetzel 2015; Walshaw and Stoetzel, this volume). In one of the only archaeology projects targeting recent centuries on the coast, Sarah Croucher (2015) explored the nineteenth-century Omani clove plantation at Mgoli, focusing on gendered uses of space. Pemba has become one of the archaeologically better studied regions of the coast, with research and publication ongoing.

p.232

Four settlements, briefly sketched

Mtambwe Mkuu

Mtambwe Mkuu sits near modern Wete on a small islet. It was founded in the ninth century by people using ETT/TIW and other Early Iron Age ceramics (Horton and Clark 1985), grew into a 16 ha settlement of c. 1,000 people, and was abandoned in the fifteenth century. Soon after Mtambwe’s founding, a timber hall was built on the plateau, then rebuilt in stone in the tenth century (Horton in press). Also on the plateau is a sequence of at least two stone mosques and remains of some eight other buildings. Twenty burials of men, women and children spanning 1000–1150 CE likely represent a family cemetery,

with suggestions of early Sunni/Ibadi and later Shi'ite burial practice. A single stone tomb held a mature female skeleton (Horton in press).

The domestic sector revealed evidence of shoreline management as early as the twelfth century, including a line of mangrove stakes to control erosion behind which a midden accumulated. The important Mtambwe coin hoard (Horton *et al.* 1986) came from a pit in the corner of a modest earthen house: 630 locally minted silver coins (Pallaver, this volume), and 8 gold coins including Fatimid dinars, the latest dating to 1066. Associated indigo-dyed cloth and a silver clasp suggest the coins' burial in a bag (Horton *et al.* 1986). The hoard speaks to the presence of eleventh–twelfth-century international merchant activity, notably in the absence of stone dwellings. The fabric leads us back to the plateau where, in addition to mosques, cemetery and non-domestic buildings, lime-lined pits could indicate indigo dyeing, leather tanning or both (Horton in press; LaViolette, this volume).

All evidence attests to a well-off town from its founding onward, with certain finds revealing particular points of contact. Red-painted and graphited earthenware found at Mtambwe is virtually identical to vessels found in several distant locales. On Pemba, robust assemblages of these ceramics were found at Bandarikuu (Fleisher, this volume), while smaller numbers are found at other similarly dated sites such as Shanga (Horton 1996). More notably, eleventh–twelfth-century Sharma, Yemen, thought to be a transit point for sailors (for example, Rougelle 2004; Beaujard, this volume), yielded developed Tana Tradition pottery including red-painted/graphited ware, suggesting the possibility that Pemba was the bowls' source and possibly that Pembans themselves were in Sharma, in transit while engaging in Indian Ocean trade. There are significant amounts of it in multiple contexts in the Comoros (for example, Wright 1992, this volume; Vérin 1986), once considered its source. Beaujard (this volume) notes that graphite is available on Madagascar and on the eastern African mainland but not in the Comoros, raising questions about this region as the source of the pottery, and begging the question of whether it all originated on Pemba (Horton in press). Additionally, chlorite-schist and rock crystal found at Mtambwe point to exchange connections with Madagascar (Horton in press).

p.233

Ras Mkumbuu

Ras Mkumbuu sits at the end of a peninsula reaching westward from central Pemba, near Chake Chake. It had two settlement phases: tenth–twelfth-century, over 6 hectares on a low (15 m) plateau; and fourteenth–sixteenth-century, 10 hectares by the shore (Horton in press). There were two working harbours. Despite a sparse historical record related to Pemba, there are tantalising mentions in early documents that probably refer to the island. Most famously, al-Mas'udi visited a place in 916 CE called Qanbalu, where he noted a Muslim ruling family and townspeople, and that the place was able to trade for goods such

as ivory and gold from the African interior (Freeman Grenville 1962: 14–17). Qanbalu has been linked to the entire island of Pemba (for example, Trimmingham 1975: 122 ff.; Horton and Middleton 2000: 66; Wood, this volume), but also to Ras Mkumbuu specifically (Kirkman 1959), and writers continued to mention Qanbalu into the thirteenth century (LaViolette and Fleisher 2009). Kirkman's (1959) work here was inspired by this reference, although he never found the early deposits; Horton (in press) located the early phase in 1991.

In that early phase, represented by building mounds and abundant domestic deposits, Horton documented a series of timber buildings with clay floors, hearths and associated middens (including a Muslim burial); a stone mosque sequence, suggesting the site was founded by Muslims; and another stone building. The mosque originated in the tenth century as a timber structure which burned and was rebuilt in *Porites* coral later that century. Horton (in press) suggests its proportions, similar to those at Sanje ya Kati (Pradines 2009), may indicate Ibadi practice (echoing hints at Mtambwe and Chwaka). In the early eleventh century a third, larger mosque was built on the same spot. In the twelfth–thirteenth centuries this mosque (and part of town) was used only as a cemetery; Horton (in press) located 15 Muslim graves ([Figure 21.1](#)).

Early earth and timber houses were rebuilt in coral with bonded mud by the eleventh century. At its most impressive, there were some 15 stone-built houses and at least 14 tombs, 6 of which were pillar tombs, dating to the fourteenth century or later (see Horton, 'Islamic Architecture', this volume). A mosque wall bears ship graffiti, as seen elsewhere on the coast (Garlake and Garlake 1964; Horton and Clark 1985; Gilbert, this volume).

Ras Mkumbuu's numerous stone houses suggest it was an important merchant town as well as prominent in other ways, and the range of materials excavated confirms broad trade connections. Virtually overlapping in time with Mtambwe, and also on the west coast of the island, local earthenwares from the two sites differ; there is no ETT/TIW and no significant quantity of Sasanian-Islamic or white-glazed pottery with Persian Gulf origins at Ras Mkumbuu (as seen at Tumbe, for example; Fleisher, this volume). Whereas timber and earth houses at Mtambwe yielded that significant presence of red painted/graphited wares, there are virtually none from Mkumbuu. These differences do not point to the particular northern connections Mtambwe clearly had, or to the link with the Comoros.



[*Figure 21.1*](#) View of pillar tomb and graves, Ras Mkumbuu (Photograph by J. Fleisher)

Chwaka

In *c.* 1050 CE, settlers came to the recently abandoned site of Tumbe in northeast Pemba, moved past its eastern edge about 50 m, and founded Chwaka. Within a century it covered 8 ha; by 1300 it measured 12 ha where it remained until abandonment in the early sixteenth century. Chwaka comprised densely packed earthen houses, stone mosques and tombs, and a stone house. This elevated, breezy spot with a view of Micheweni Bay and peninsula attracted additional settlers to it after Chwaka's abandonment; a portion of Tumbe was reoccupied in the eighteenth century by Mazrui Arabs from Mombasa, who built a small fort (similar to that in Chake Chake; LaViolette *et al.* 2008).

Research at Chwaka located earthen houses in stratified series along with neighbourhood middens. All evidence indicates a well-to-do town, consuming an abundance of local and imported goods – ceramics, beads, metal tools and personal items – throughout its history. In addition to extensive other subsistence information, houses provided evidence for a local millet-based diet transitioning to one based on Asian rice in the late first millennium (Walshaw 2010). There was also a striking increase in the importation of large bowls, presumably for food presentation, in the early first millennium, and also local production away from small bowls toward larger bowls and platters. These changes, plus faunal evidence for feasting, has led Fleisher (2010b) to argue that on Pemba and elsewhere on the coast there was an increasingly competitive atmosphere among polities in the fourteenth–fifteenth centuries, such that competitive feasting was a way to

enhance the reputation of leaders. Material from the houses and middens also included production materials for pottery, cloth and iron.

Four stone-built mosques index socio-economic and cultural transformations at a settlement where nearly everyone lived in timber and earth houses. A first mosque made entirely of *Porites* reef coral was erected in the eleventh century in the middle of town, echoing the pattern at Ras Mkumbuu and other early second-millennium settlements on the coast (Horton, 'Islamic Architecture', this volume). It is stratified below the standing ruins of a later mosque (Horton 2004). A second mosque was built in the thirteenth century (with the first probably still in use), at the north edge of the bluff, echoing a trend on the coast at that time for siting mosques near the water's edge, providing intervisibility with approaching vessels (Fleisher *et al.* 2015). A rear hall with a small window into the main hall may be a women's room, suggesting adoption of changing norms elsewhere in the Muslim world and seen also at Ras Mkumbuu (LaViolette *et al.* 2014; Horton in press). Among related finds included a crushed ostrich eggshell, which probably once hung from the *mihrab* as they still do on Pemba and elsewhere. In the fourteenth century the first mosque was razed and over it built a spectacular congregation mosque in coral rag with *Porites* details. This new larger structure was later, further enlarged with two side halls, tripling its capacity, speaking to population growth but also to growing community wealth and standards (Fleisher 2010a). While the earlier mosques had timber/mortar roofs, the congregational mosque's roof comprised six mortared limestone cupolas and two barrel vaults. The *mihrab*, one of the most decorated on Pemba and among the most extraordinary on the coast, bore multiple registers of herringbone decorations, inset Chinese bowls and plaster rosettes (Pearce 1920; Garlake 1966). Stone tombs sit just north, signaling a large, central precinct flanked by the two mosques, and a relatively simple stone house sits close by. Finally, with the second and third still standing, a fourth, small mosque was constructed in the fifteenth century, which oral traditions say commemorated a deceased ruler. It was largely intact a century ago, and is notable for its elaborate cupolas which have now fallen.

p.235

Chwaka's residents invested heavily in spiritual life, expanding their architectural offerings to absorb their population with bigger and better structures and amenities in a town with modest domestic spaces. The presence of high-ranking merchants might be questioned, but the full range of goods was flowing into the town. Evidence for specific networks is found in the form of the architecture. The roof of the congregational mosque directly echoes designs at Kilwa to the south (Wynne-Jones, this volume), and was outstanding not only on the island but on the coast, signalling a local consciousness about participating in that larger world.

Lastly, the fifteenth–sixteenth-century citadel of Pujini sits on Pemba’s central/southwest coast. Its defining feature is a rectangular stone rampart surrounding 1.5 ha of open space and structures, including a multi-storied house built in classic fourteenth–fifteenth-century Swahili style (Gensheimer, this volume). Nearby are deposits containing a stone mosque and two wells, and small village mound likely contemporary with the settlement. We recovered ETT/TIW from the mosque area and at spots beneath the main site, but found no early intact deposits (an ETT site with stone well lies 3 km south of Pujini; LaViolette and Fleisher 1995).

The rampart comprises three parallel walls and supported a parapet walk (Pearce 1920). Some, perhaps all, of the space within those walls was divided into rooms. This configuration is a larger version (100+ m on a side, vs. 50) of the fourteenth-century southern courtyard at Husuni Kubwa, Kilwa (Chittick 1963), and probably modelled after it as the only comparable structure on the coast. There were gates through the rampart, west and east. Pearce (1920) described the western entrance as a ‘re-entrant gate’ but details are long erased; immediately inside that gate were plaster-floored rooms, a buried *finjo* pot for spiritual protection (Allen 1993: 226), and imported and local artefacts, such that this space resembles the entrance to a Swahili stone house rather than a military-style fort. On the north, a channel from the ocean through mangrove provided boat access (Horton and Clark 1985); meanwhile an inside staircase reached up to the parapet, opposite which a ladder on the outside would have allowed unloading of goods. Pujini appears to have been built to impress and defend like a small fort, also to embody elite stone-house principles, be a peer to its contemporary stonetowns, and serve as a trade entrepôt (Pradines 2004). A unique configuration, its components nonetheless exemplify coastal norms.

p.236

The principal house included a large *zidaka* (see Gensheimer, Meier, Sheriff, this volume) that once boasted Chinese bowls; doorways surrounded by carved *Porites* and plaster decorations; and a dhow graffito. There are a few simpler stone houses and guest quarters with a toilet/bathing area near the western gate (further echoing expectations of a merchant’s house). There are work, storage and decorative spaces, including another dhow inscription. In the northeast is a sub-surface shrine to land/sea spirits: open-air steps lead down into fossilised coral, to a small, once-domed room (Pearce [1920] 1967: 392ff.; Horton and Clark 1985; Fleisher and LaViolette 2007), whose walls bear a moulded *siwa* (Allen 1993), a ceremonial side-blown horn, like the *finjo*, associated with coastal – and inland – eastern African polities.

Deposits are dominated by locally made earthenwares, with carinated bowls amounting to almost 25 per cent of the total. Imports are mostly Chinese wares and Persian monochromes, copper-alloy items, glass vessels and beads, and rock crystal, possibly from Madagascar. Notes on a Portuguese raid in 1520 (Strandes [1899] 1971: 9; Gray 1962: 56)

described a ‘deserted village fortified in the manner of a fortress’; it was noted that the sheikh had recently fled to Mombasa. Pujini suggests connection and wealth, and tensions and guardedness, reflecting changes on the coast: the transition from a western Indian Ocean Swahili world to one where old orders were breaking down and outsiders exercised new kinds of power (LaViolette 2004; Fleisher and LaViolette 2007).

Conclusion

Pemba was a densely settled hub on the central coast with a wide variety of settlements including long-inhabited towns like Mtambwe Mkuu, settlements that shifted significantly from the first to second millennium like Ras Mkumbuu and Chwaka, and even a small citadel. The diversity and density of settlements suggests that Pemba participated in rich social, religious and economic relationships, both intra-island and in the larger coastal and Indian Ocean world. The direct ties I have highlighted here include symbolic practices such as the *finjo* pot and *siwa*, and production practices such as iron-working, which tie the islanders to broader mainland cultures. Religious architecture and practices link Pembans to multiple Islamic sects in the mosaic way seen elsewhere on the coast. Earthenwares link its settlements to broad coastal traditions but particularly northern ones, and others all the way to Sharma and the Comoros; its earth and stone architecture mostly ally with coastal examples, but we can identify specific ties to Shanga and Kilwa. The polities that coexisted during the first half of the second millennium have much in common, forming different nodes of a pan-island community, yet each with its own identity on Pemba and, one can imagine, in the broader Swahili world. It is not difficult to posit that the density of resourceful activity on Pemba was in part due to peaceful competition on the island itself, exploitation of the abundant land and sea resources available, and nurturing of long-distance networks based on particular cultural and economic ties to a wide range of ports and people.

p.237

References

- Allen, J. de V. 1993. *Swahili Origins*. London: James Currey.
- Buchanan, L. A. C. 1932. *The Ancient Monuments of Pemba*. Zanzibar: Government Printer.
- Chittick, N. 1963. ‘Kilwa and the Arab settlement of the East African coast’. *Journal of African History* 4 (2): 179–90.
- Croucher, S. K. 2015. *Capitalism and Cloves: An Archaeology of Plantation Life on Nineteenth-Century Zanzibar*. New York: Springer.
- Fleisher, J. 2003. ‘Viewing stonetowns from the countryside: an archaeological approach

- to Swahili regional systems, AD 800–1500'. PhD diss., University of Virginia.
- Fleisher, J. 2010a. 'Swahili synoecism: rural settlements and town formation on the central East African coast, AD 750–1500'. *Journal of Field Archaeology* 35 (3): 265–82.
- Fleisher, J. 2010b. 'Rituals of consumption and the politics of feasting on the eastern African coast, AD 700–1500'. *Journal of World Prehistory* 23 (4): 195–217.
- Fleisher, J. and LaViolette, A. 2007. 'The changing power of Swahili houses, fourteenth to nineteenth centuries AD'. In *The Durable House: House Society Models in Archaeology*, edited by R. Beck, 175–97. Carbondale: Center for Archaeological Investigations.
- Fleisher, J. and LaViolette, A. 2013. 'The early Swahili trade village of Tumbe, Pemba Island, Tanzania, AD 600–950. *Antiquity* 87 (338): 1151–68.
- Fleisher, J., Lane, P., LaViolette, A., Christie, A., Horton, M., Pollard, E., *et al.* 2015. 'When did the Swahili become maritime?' *American Anthropologist* 117 (1): 100–15.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. (Ed.) 1962. *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the First to the Earlier Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1981. *The Book of the Wonders of India by Captain Buzurg ibn Shahriya of Ramhormuz*. London: E. J. Brill.
- Garlake, P. S. 1966. *The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Garlake, P. and Garlake, M. 1964. 'Early ship engravings of the East African coast'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 63: 197–206.
- Gray, J. 1962. *History of Zanzibar from the Middle Ages to 1856*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Horton, M. C. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. C. 2004. 'Islam, archaeology, and Swahili identity'. In *Changing Social Identity with the Spread of Islam: Archaeological Perspectives*, edited by D. Whitcomb, 67–88. Chicago: Oriental Institute Seminars No. 1.
- Horton, M. C. in press. *Zanzibar and Pemba: The Archaeology of an Indian Ocean Archipelago*. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. C. and Clark, C. M. 1985. 'Archaeological survey of Zanzibar'. *Azania* 20: 167–71.
- Horton, M. C. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Horton, M. C., Brown, H. M. and Oddy, W. A. 1986. 'The Mtambwe hoard'. *Azania* 21: 115–23.
- Ingrams, W. H. 1931. *Zanzibar: Its History and Its People*. London: F. Cass.
- Kirkman, J. S. 1959. 'Excavations at Ras Mkumbuu on the Island of Pemba'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 53: 161–78.

- LaViolette, A. 1989. 'Preliminary report: excavations and survey at Pujini, a fortress on Pemba Island, Tanzania'. *Nyame Akuma* 32: 35–8.
- LaViolette, A. 1996. 'Report on excavations at the Swahili site of Pujini, Pemba Island, Tanzania'. *Nyame Akuma* 46: 72–83.
- LaViolette, A. 2000. 'Swahili archaeology on Pemba Island, Tanzania: Pujini, Bandari ya Faraji, and Chwaka, 1997–1998'. *Nyame Akuma* 53: 50–63.
- LaViolette, A. 2004. 'Swahili archaeology and history on Pemba, Tanzania: a critique and case study of the use of written and oral sources in archaeology'. In *African Historical Archaeologies*, edited by A. M. Reid and P. J. Lane, 125–62. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum.
- LaViolette, A. and Fleisher, J. 1995. 'Reconnaissance of sites bearing Triangular Incised (Tana Tradition) Ware on Pemba Island, Tanzania'. *Nyame Akuma* 44: 59–65.
- LaViolette, A. and Fleisher, J. 2009. 'The urban history of a rural place: Swahili archaeology on Pemba Island, Tanzania, 700–1500 AD'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 42 (3): 433–55.

p.238

- LaViolette, A., Fleisher, J. and Horton, M. 2014. 'Archaeology of Swahili religious architecture and practice at Chwaka, Pemba Island, Tanzania'. Paper presented at the biennial meeting of the Society of Africanist Archaeologists, Johannesburg, 14–18 July.
- LaViolette, A., Fleisher, J. and Mapunda, B. 2008. 'Pemba archaeological project preliminary report: third season, June–July 2006'. Department of Archives, Museums, and Antiquities, Zanzibar.
- Pearce, F. B. [1920] 1967. *Zanzibar: The Island Metropolis of Eastern Africa*. London: T. Fisher Unwin.
- Pradines, S. 2004. *Fortifications et Urbanisation en Afrique Orientale*. Oxford: Cambridge Monographs in African Archaeology 58.
- Pradines, S. 2009. 'L'île de Sanjé ya Kati (Kilwa, Tanzanie): Un mythe Shirâzi bien réel'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 44 (1): 49–73.
- Rougelle, A. 2004. 'Le Yémen entre Orient et Afrique: Sharma, un entrepôt du commerce médiéval sûr la Cote Sud de l'Arabie'. *Annales Islamologiques* 38: 201–53.
- Stoetzel, J. M. 2015. 'Towards a Swahili historical ecology: phytolith-based analysis in coastal eastern Africa since AD 600'. PhD diss., University of Virginia.
- Strandes, J. [1899] 1971. *The Portuguese Period in East Africa*, Trans. by J. F. Wallwork, Ed. J. S. Kirkman. Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau.
- Trimingham, J. S. 1975. 'The Arab geographers and the East African coast'. In *East Africa and the Orient: Cultural Syntheses in Pre-colonial Times*, edited by H. N. Chittick and R. Rotberg, 115–46. New York: Africana Publishing Co.

- Vérin, P. 1986. *The History of Civilisation in North Madagascar*. Rotterdam: Balkema.
- Walshaw, S. 2010. 'Converting to rice: urbanization, Islamization and crops on Pemba Island, Tanzania AD 700–1500'. *World Archaeology* 42 (1): 137–53.
- Walshaw, S. 2015. *Swahili Trade, Urbanization, and Food Production: Botanical Perspectives from Pemba Island, Tanzania, ad 700–1500*. BAR: Cambridge Monographs in African Archaeology. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Wright, H. T. 1992. 'Early Islam, oceanic trade and town development on Nzwani: the Comorian Archipelago in the XIth–XVth centuries ad'. *Azania* 27: 81–128.

22

ZANZIBAR

Tom Fitton

The island of Zanzibar occupies an advantageous location in the overlap between the cultural and trading worlds of eastern Africa's maritime rim and the Indian Ocean's western rim. Since the first settlements of approximately the sixth century CE, Zanzibar's history can be seen as a microcosm of the wider Swahili coast, subject to similar trends of prosperity and decline. If the Swahili are regarded as the traders and cultural brokers of eastern Africa, Zanzibar has from an early date been one of the key gateways through which access was negotiated.

Zanzibar Island is more properly known as Unguja, although here 'Zanzibar' is retained in keeping with the title of the chapter. It is the more southerly of the islands of the Zanzibar Archipelago, separated from the northern island of Pemba by a deep channel. Zanzibar lies on the edge of the African continental shelf, separated from the Tanzanian mainland by the relatively shallow Zanzibar Channel. Though generally low-lying, a ridge of hills in northern Zanzibar rise to the highest peak of the archipelago at 120 m above sea level. The western shoreline is characterised by enclosed bays, small island chains and mangrove creeks, while the eastern coast comprises extensive white sand beaches protected from the heavy swell of the Indian Ocean by coral reefs and shallow lagoons.

The island has a long but fragmentary record of occupation going back 20,000 years (Shipton *et al.* 2016; Horton and Chami, Boivin and Crowther, this volume). Excavations at Kuumbi Cave (Panga ya Kuumbi) demonstrate a discontinuous sequence of human occupation that predates the island's separation from the mainland by rising sea-levels following the Last Glacial Maximum (Sinclair *et al.* 2006; Chami 2009: 41–79; Prendergast *et al.* 2016; Punwong *et al.* 2013). The relatively limited extent of archaeological survey inland on Zanzibar means that evidence of continued or new habitation after this separation may yet be discovered at other sites, but sea-level rise restricted access to the island to sailing societies.

Early sites and histories

By the early first millennium CE eastern Africa was known to Greek and Roman merchants, and various ports along its coast are recorded in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (c. 40 CE) (Casson 1989). Historically, Zanzibar and Pemba have been considered as separate entities rather than a united archipelago, and it is of interest therefore that while both the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* and Ptolemy's *Geography* (c. 150 CE) describe the island of Menouthias, thought in the *Periplus* to refer to Pemba and in the *Geography* to Madagascar, no mention is made in these texts of Zanzibar (Horton 1990).

p.240

Around the sixth century CE, Zanzibar, like the mainland coast, was settled by iron-working agriculturalists. Two harbour sites with timber and daub architecture at Fukuchani and Unguja Ukuu represent the earliest evidence for this settlement on Zanzibar (Map 3, p. xxiv; Horton and Clark 1985). These show evidence of a diet based on fish, shellfish and hunted animals, as well as cultivation of millet and sorghum, and limited domestication of livestock (Juma 2004; Quintana-Morales and Horton 2014; Fleisher *et al.* 2015; Walshaw 2015). Significant quantities of iron slag and bead-grinders indicate that the sites were also centres of craft production, and ceramic assemblages dominated by the Early Tana Tradition and occasional sherds of Kwale ware demonstrate cultural connections to the contemporary Kenyan and Tanzanian coasts (Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2011). It is likely that trade was primarily regional in the early phases of these towns, but developed swiftly through existing maritime networks; finds of imported Persian Gulf Sasanian Islamic wares, western Indian glass and ceramics, and even reported late-Roman wares at Unguja Ukuu attest to early long-distance connections (Horton 1987; Juma 2004; Boivin *et al.* 2013; Wood *et al.* 2016).

The growth of trading centres

The eighth century heralded an increase in maritime trading activity around the Indian Ocean, spearheaded by Abbasid trade with the Persian Gulf (Whitehouse 2001; Sheriff 2010). At this time, Zanzibar's coastal sites increased in number and size, with new settlements established at Mkokotoni, and smaller, potentially temporary settlements at Pwani Mchumgumli (also known as Pwani Debuli/Dehuri) and Fumba, opposite Unguja Ukuu (Horton and Clark 1985) (Map 3, p. xxiv). Unguja Ukuu itself grew substantially in this period. An increase in imported artefacts, particularly ceramics from c. 3 per cent to 9 per cent of the total assemblage, demonstrates the site's rise as the principal settlement and port of trade in the Zanzibar Archipelago (Juma 2004, this volume). The town, standing at the base of a peninsula on the south-west coast, was well-situated to take advantage of local and regional maritime trade. The port boasted a wide beach and broad, shallow

harbour, and the buildings and shoreline structures of the town would have been clearly visible from the water of Menai Bay. Like its contemporaries on both the Zanzibar and Pemba coasts it faces west across the channel towards the continent, thereby facing the majority of maritime traffic along the eastern African coast and ensuring protection from the heavy swell of the ocean.

The role of Unguja Ukuu, and Zanzibar generally, as an early trade hub may have meant an early Islamic presence (Insoll 2003). A probable mosque excavated at Unguja Ukuu was dated to *c.* 900 CE (Juma 2004), and another possible coral mosque with underlying timber structures has been identified on the shoreline of the town but not yet dated (Fitton and Wynne-Jones in press). The coral mosque at Kizimkazi, the oldest still in active use in eastern Africa, is dated by an inscription to 500 ah/1107 CE, but is likely to have had earlier foundations (Horton and Clark 1985). The position of known mosques close to or along the shoreline, and evidence for re-use of maritime artefacts in mosque contexts, may suggest a strong link between Islam and maritime connections.

Between the tenth and eleventh centuries CE, Zanzibar appears to have gone through a period of settlement discontinuity and reorganisation; this is seen at sites along the coast at this time (Fleisher *et al.* 2015). Change may have been related to or exacerbated by the disruption of Indian Ocean trade in the period following the Zanj revolt in Mesopotamia (869–883 CE), and the reorganisation of Persian Gulf ports after the earthquake of 977 CE at Siraf (Whitehouse 2001). In the Zanzibar Archipelago the subsequent movement was towards more isolated sites, and may have been part of a defensive strategy. Changes in the settlement plans and architectural styles of the new towns, however, including the more frequent appearance of mosques, may instead indicate a cultural and religious shift (Horton in press), together with a trend away from the beaching harbours of the first millennium, and towards sites with deeper harbours and anchorage (Fitton 2016).

p.241

Sites of the tenth century onwards

The period 1100–1400 CE marks precolonial Zanzibar's most prosperous period. The rise of Tumbatu as its principal town in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is reflected in the site's extensive ruins (Map 3, p. xxiv; Horton in press). It is located on a small island off the northwest coast of Zanzibar, with ruins visible from the Zanzibar channel. The water between the island and Zanzibar's coast is sheltered, although shallows and coral reefs lie close to both shores. Tumbatu's earliest phases of timber and daub architecture have been dated to around 1100 CE, and include at least one likely mosque, with a second built during the twelfth century next to the beach (Horton and Clark 1985). Around 1200 CE, a significant expansion to the north-east included the construction of the grand Friday

mosque, followed in the later thirteenth century by a series of irregularly spaced, large houses with courtyards. The original settlement also appears to have been rebuilt in coral in a more regular, grid-like arrangement of courtyard houses with associated kiosks. The geographer Yaqut (writing *c.* 1220 CE) described Zanzibar as a centre of trade and Tumbatu as the new location of the people and seat of the king of the Zanj (Trimingham 1964). Imported pottery at the site made up to 11 per cent of the total assemblage: the highest proportion found in this period on the Swahili coast (Horton *in press*). Local networks also appear to have benefitted from the wealth of Tumbatu, and late thirteenth-century expansions to Shangani, north of Mkokotoni, and sherds of thirteenth-century ceramics and a burnt daub structure on the northern headland of Fukuchani, demonstrate limited reoccupation of Zanzibar Island opposite. It would seem therefore that, regardless of the cause or purpose of the tenth-century settlement shifts, throughout the early centuries of the second millennium Zanzibar remained the gateway of the eastern African coast for an array of overlapping trade networks.

The fourteenth century, however, saw the start of the decline of Zanzibar as a major trade hub. Ibn Battuta's maritime voyage along the coast *c.* 1331 CE bypassed Zanzibar without a mention, and it is possible that Kilwa and Mombasa's holds over inland routes, especially those related to the gold trade, had started to draw maritime traffic away from the archipelago (Chittick 1974; Horton 1996; McConkey and McEarlen 2007). A shift in the regional balance could have been exacerbated by the reliance of Zanzibar's increasingly urbanised population upon imported food, and there is evidence of social upheaval in the sudden and violent abandonment of Tumbatu *c.* 1350 CE, with signs of burning and deliberate destruction of houses and the Central, Friday and Shoreline mosques (Horton *in press*). Yet other sites continued in use during this period, including Mkokotoni, Fukuchani and Shangani (Horton and Clark 1985). The number of coin hoards found on both Zanzibar and Pemba from this period (Ingrams 1931), along with the continuing import of Islamic glazed wares and Chinese celadon, demonstrates that although Zanzibar's star had fallen, it was not extinguished and the island remained both wealthy and well-connected to maritime trade networks (Horton and Clark 1985).

p.242

The eighteenth century onwards

Relatively little is known of Zanzibar thereafter until the eighteenth century. Archaeological settlements of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries indicate a broad economic shift towards agricultural production and evidence for exploitation by the Portuguese (Norman and LaViolette 2016; Prestholdt this volume). Textual sources provide some indication of a fragmented political situation, and the only significant town known on Zanzibar in this period was the reoccupied Unguja Ukuu, which was attacked

and raided in 1499 CE by a Portuguese vessel, with the reported deaths of several hundred local people and the capture of four ships in the harbour (Pearce 1920). The sites of Uroa and Chwaka represent the earliest known settlements on the island's east coast, and may date to the fifteenth century (Horton and Clark 1985). Sixteenth-century Portuguese accounts refer to Zanzibar in terms of its agricultural production, and inscriptions at both sites indicate that these fishing and farming settlements were visited by Portuguese vessels in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Two stone houses with loop-holed enclosures, one at Fukuchani and one a short distance away at Mvuleni, also date to around the sixteenth century (Horton and Clark 1985; Gray 1954). The unusual plan of these buildings suggests that they may have been fortified Portuguese farms, although no certain Portuguese artefacts have yet been identified in conjunction with either site, and the materials and construction methods indicate that they were built by Swahili craftsmen (Horton and Clark 1985). It is possible that they were established as remote farms representing a token Portuguese presence, and worked by local labour for colonial benefit (Norman and LaViolette 2016).

The only other notable settlements on Zanzibar in this period appear to have been at Shangani and Forodhani, now districts of Zanzibar Stone Town, and Kizimkazi, which may have become a political centre of power for the Hadimu people on the island in the eighteenth century (Horton and Clark 1985; Kleppe 2001). The pattern of development at Zanzibar Stone Town from the sixteenth century illustrates the transition from its traditional Swahili origins towards its later Omani and European architectural styles (Sheriff, this volume). The town has a good harbour and plentiful fresh water, and a Portuguese factory was noted there by an English vessel that wintered in the harbour in 1591 (Pearce 1920). An Augustinian mission was built there around 1600, and the queen of Zanzibar, Fatuma binti Hasan, reportedly lived next door to this church at the time of the siege of Mombasa in 1698 CE. Following the Mazrui capture of Fort Jesus in Mombasa in 1698, the Omani Busaidi family used the site of the former Portuguese factory at Forodhani as the basis of a small fort. This Old Fort, also known as the Gereza of Stone Town, was redeveloped on several occasions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries before being converted into a prison (Sheriff 1987). The pattern of colonial exploitation of Zanzibar in the early modern period tends therefore towards the exploitation of either the island's agricultural potential or its strategic military and trading position in relation to the ports and maritime networks of the continental coast. Permanent colonial occupation and control seem almost to have been a by-product until control of Shangani and of Zanzibar was ceded to the Busaidis in 1795. Over the following century, while its inland valleys were turned over to profitable spice plantations, Stone Town rose again as an Omani entrepôt, as the new centre of the ivory and slave trade for the eastern African coast (Sheriff 1987, this volume).

The remarkable resilience of Zanzibar's long-lived settlements as trade entrepôts can be attributed to its usefulness as a gateway and the adaptability of its inhabitants to the ever-

changing winds of trade and tides of fortune. The island's location provided a central meeting ground for trade routes running along the coast from Somalia to southern Africa, as well as a gateway and watering hole for Islamic merchants and South Asian voyagers sailing directly to the archipelago across the Indian Ocean. During periods of global disruption of trade routes, however, particularly in the tenth and fourteenth centuries, the fertility of the island and an opportunistic attitude appear to have allowed its inhabitants to reorganise and resettle as agricultural communities, before setting out their stalls again when the opportunity arose.

p.243

References

- Boivin, N., Crowther, A., Helm, R. and Fuller, D. Q. 2013. 'East Africa and Madagascar in the Indian Ocean world'. *Journal of World Prehistory* 26: 213–81.
- Casson, L. 1989. *The Periplus Maris Erythraei. Text with Introduction, Translation and Commentary*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Chami, F. 2009. *Zanzibar and the Swahili Coast from c. 30,000 Years Ago*. Dar es Salaam: E&D Vision Publishing.
- Chittick, N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast. Volume I: History and Archaeology*. Memoir 5. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Fitton, T. 2016. 'First millennium harbour spaces on Zanzibar: more than the sum of their ports'. Paper presented at 23rd Biennial Meeting of the Society of Africanist Archaeologists (SAfA), Toulouse, June 26–July 2.
- Fitton, T. and Wynne-Jones, S. in press 2017. 'Understanding the layout of the early coastal settlement at Unguja Ukuu, Zanzibar'. *Antiquity*.
- Fleisher, J. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2011. 'Ceramics and the early Swahili: deconstructing the Early Tana Tradition'. *African Archaeological Review* 28: 245–78.
- Fleisher, J., Lane, P., LaViolette, A., Horton, M., Pollard, E., Quintana Morales, E. M., *et al.* 2015. 'When did the Swahili become maritime?' *American Anthropologist* 117 (1): 100–15.
- Gray, J. 1954. 'The Wadebuli and the Wadiba'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 36: 22–42.
- Horton, M. C. 1987. 'The Swahili corridor'. *Scientific American* 257 (3): 76–84.
- Horton, M. C. 1990. 'The *Periplus* and East Africa'. *Azania* 25: 95–9.
- Horton, M. C. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. Memoir 14. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. C. in press. *Zanzibar and Pemba: the Archaeology of an Indian Ocean Archipelago*. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.

- Horton, M. C. and Clark, C. M. 1985. 'Zanzibar archaeological survey 1984–5'. *Azania* 20: 161–71.
- Ingrams, W. H. 1931. *Zanzibar: Its History and Its People*. London: Witherby.
- Insoll, T. 2003. *The Archaeology of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Juma, A. 2004. *Unguja Ukuu on Zanzibar: An Archaeological Study of Early Urbanism*. Uppsala: Uppsala University Department of Archaeology and Ancient History (Studies in Global Archaeology 3).
- Kleppe, E. 2001. 'Archaeological investigations at Kizimkazi Dimbani'. In *Islam in East Africa: New Sources*, edited by B. S. Amoretti, 361–84. Rome: Herda.
- Mackintosh-Smith, T. (Ed.) 2003. *The Travels of Ibn Battutah*. London: Picador.
- McConkey, R. and McErlean, T. 2007. 'Mombasa Island: a maritime perspective'. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 11 (2): 99–121.
- Norman, N. and LaViolette, A. 2016. 'Avant guard and awaiting support: considerations of the uneven stops and starts of the colonial project'. Paper presented at the 23rd Biennial Meeting of the Society of Africanist Archaeologists (SAfA), Toulouse, June 26–July 2.
- Pearce, F. B. 1920. *Zanzibar: The Island Metropolis of Eastern Africa*. London: T Fisher Unwin Ltd.
- Prendergast, M. E., Rouby, H., Punwong, P., Marchant, R., Crowther, A., Kourampas, N., *et al.* 2016. 'Continental island formation and the archaeology of defaunation on Zanzibar, Eastern Africa'. *PLoS ONE* 11 (2): e0149565.
- Punwong, P., Marchant, R. and Selby, K. 2013. 'Holocene mangrove dynamics from Unguja Ukuu, Zanzibar'. *Quaternary International* 298: 4–19.
- Quintana Morales, E. M. and Horton, M. C. 2014. 'Fishing and fish consumption in the Swahili communities of East Africa, 700–1400 CE'. *Internet Archaeology* 37 (3).
- Sheriff, A. 1987. *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar: Integration of an East African Commercial Empire into the World Economy, 1770–1873*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Sheriff, A. 2010. *Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean*. New York: Columbia University Press.

p.244

- Shipton, C., Crowther, A., Kourampas, N., Prendergast, M. E., Horton, M. C., Douka, K., *et al.* 2016. 'Reinvestigation of Kuumbi Cave, Zanzibar, reveals Later Stone Age coastal habitation, early Holocene abandonment and Iron Age reoccupation'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 51 (2): 197–233.
- Sinclair, P., Juma, A. and Chami, F. 2006. 'Excavations at Kuumbi Cave on Zanzibar in 2005'. In *The African Archaeology Network: Research in Progress*, edited by J. Kinahan and J. Kinahan, 95–106. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press.

- Trimingham, J. S. 1964. *Islam in East Africa*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Walshaw, S. 2010. 'Converting to rice: urbanization, Islamization and crops on Pemba Island, Tanzania AD 700–1500'. *World Archaeology* 42 (1): 137–53.
- Walshaw, S. 2015. *Swahili Urbanisation, Trade and Food Production: Botanical Perspectives from Pemba Island, Tanzania, ad 600–1500*. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports (BAR) International Series 2755.
- Whitehouse, D. 2001. 'East Africa and the maritime trade of the Indian Ocean AD 800–1500'. In *Islam in East Africa: New Sources*, edited by B. S. Amoretti, 411–24. Rome: Herder.
- Wood, M., Panighello, S., Orsega, E. F., Robertshaw, P., van Elteren, J. T., Crowther, A., *et al.* 2016. 'Zanzibar and Indian Ocean trade in the first millennium CE: the glass bead evidence'. *Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences*: 1–23.

23

THE HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE MAFIA ARCHIPELAGO

Annalisa Christie

The Mafia Archipelago, comprising Mafia, Chole, Juani, Jibondo and numerous uninhabited coral atolls (see Caplan this volume, [Figure 50.1](#)), has a rich archaeological record pointing to the islands' continuous occupation from the early first millennium ce. There are numerous historical traditions and many practices remain unchanged, providing great opportunity for ethno-archaeological research. Here I summarise archaeological survey and excavation conducted in the archipelago over the last 60 years.

Historical context

The archipelago was subject to several periods of colonial (external) control over the last millennium that have influenced cultural identities, activities and material culture (Walley 2002; Wynne-Jones and Mapunda 2008; Christie 2011: 100–5). Historical sources (Baumann [1895] 1957; Revington 1936; Piggott 1941a) refer to the nature and impacts of external contact from the eleventh century CE onward, following the inclusion of the islands into the control of the sultanate of Kilwa (eleventh–fifteenth centuries CE) as well as the effects of later colonisations by the Portuguese (sixteenth–seventeenth centuries CE), Omani (c. eighteenth–nineteenth centuries CE), Germans (1890–1915), and most recently British (1915–1922).

The accounts of pre-European contact focus on the acquisition of the archipelago by the sultanate of Kilwa, which likely resulted in the foundation of the settlement of Kisimani Mafia (Van Spengen 1980: 336). Although the Portuguese had limited impact on the islands (Baumann [1895] 1957: 5; Revington 1936: 34) they produced several accounts that provide insight into contemporary Mafian life. These indicate, for example, that Mafian communities were noted shipbuilders and often provided the Portuguese with

shipbuilding materials (Revington 1936: 34; Rezendes in Freeman-Grenville 1975: 183).

In the early eighteenth century, the archipelago was nominally controlled by the Imams of Muscat, who gained increasing influence beginning in 1840, after Sultan Sayyid Said moved to Zanzibar and established a direct presence in Mafia (Baumann [1895] 1957: 6). At this time Kua was sacked by the Sakalava of Madagascar, and was abandoned in favour of Chole Island (Revington 1936: 34).

The Germans took control in 1890, affecting the socio-political landscape of the archipelago very little (King 1917: 119). Their most significant change was moving the administrative centre from Chole to Kilindoni – a more suitable and centralised anchorage – in 1912. Seized by the British in 1915, Mafia was then used in the war effort against the German battleship *Konigsberg*, which wreaked havoc among the British Fleet in the region (Revington 1936: 35).

p.246

[Table 23.1](#) Summary of surveys conducted in the Mafia Archipelago 1950–2015

<i>Team / date</i>	<i>Area surveyed</i>	<i>Surveys conducted</i>	<i>Key outcomes</i>
Chami and Msemwa (1995)	Kisimani Mafia to Kilindoni	Semi-systematic coastal walkover surveys	Early Iron Age (EIA) pottery (unspecified)
Chami (1997)	Mroni Terrace (South coast); Juani Island; Jibondo	Semi-systematic coastal walkover surveys	Several sites identified including: • six EIA (c. 1–6th c. CE) sites • unspecified number of later sites (c. 11th–16th c. CE)
Chami (2000)	Northern coasts: (Bweni, Kanga, Kironawe, Ras Mbisi and Kipingwi) Bwejuu Island Juani Island	Semi-systematic walkover surveys	• Plain Ware (PW) site (c. 11–13th c. CE) near Kironawe Port • Swahili Ware (SW) (c. 14–16th c. CE) site near Kanga • Post Swahili (PS) (c. 17–19th c. CE) site Bwejuu west coast • Submerged/semi-submerged pot sherds c. 14th c. CE off Bwejuu
Wynne-Jones and Mapunda (2006)	Northwest coast (Bweni, Kanga, Kironawe, Mfiruni) Utende to Ras Kitoni Chole Island	Systematic walkover surveys (coastal and interior)	Forty sites recorded including: • fifteen potters' workshops • thirteen pottery scatters: various periods (7th–10th c. CE [1]; 11–13th c. CE [2]; 14th –16th c. CE [2]; 18th –19th c. CE [8]) • eight shell middens: unknown date • two maritime activity areas: modern
Rhodes (2006)	Chole Island	Building survey	• Record of colonial waterfront structures (Chole)
Christie (2008–2009)	Northwest coast (Bweni, Kanga, Kironawe, Mfiruni) Utende Chole Island Juani	Systematic walkover surveys (foreshore and inter-tidal) Re-visitation of previously identified sites	Sixty one sites recorded: • twenty-three pottery scatters: various periods (6th–8th c. CE; 14th–16th c. CE [6]; 18th–19th c. CE [12]; Unknown [4]; Modern [1]) • fourteen maritime activity areas: modern • twenty shell middens/scatters: various periods (18th–19th c. CE [2]; Modern [13]; Unknown [5]) • four structural remains: 18th–19th c. CE
Christie (2010)	Kua Ruins, Juani	Buildings surveys	Record of settlement
Maritime and Underwater Cultural Heritage (2012)	Kisimani Mafia	Systematic walkover surveys (foreshore and inter-tidal); Sub-surface transect surveys	Local pottery Imported ceramics (including <i>Segaffato</i>) Foreign coins Structural remains (additional to those reported by Chirik (1961)) Keel (reportedly left <i>in situ</i> following inundation) Two large circular stones (function unknown)

Archaeological surveys

The archipelago has gained increasing archaeological recognition, prompting several systematic and semi-systematic, foreshore and inter-tidal, walkover and shovel test pit (STP) surveys, ethno-archaeological research and diver reconnaissance ([Table 23.1](#)). Chami's (1999, 2000, 2004) surveys focused on identifying evidence for the archipelago's earliest occupation during the Early Iron Age (EIA). While later sites were observed, they were not reported in detail (Chami 1999: 3–4).

Wynne-Jones (2006) reported sites of wider chronological and typological variety. She placed greater emphasis on understanding the impact of different environments on settlement patterns and activities, with systematic walkover surveys also conducted on the coastal edge and inter-tidal zone (Wynne-Jones 2006: 6). In addition to pottery scatters, modern and historic maritime activity areas (such as fish traps, boat building sites and shell middens) were also recorded, documenting the diversity and importance of maritime interactions and highlighting a key area for further research.

This prompted my research project, which used an inter-disciplinary approach combining archaeological, ethnographic and environmental survey strategies to explore the socio-cultural context of maritime interactions in the archipelago, using an anthropologically informed framework (see Christie 2013b: 32).

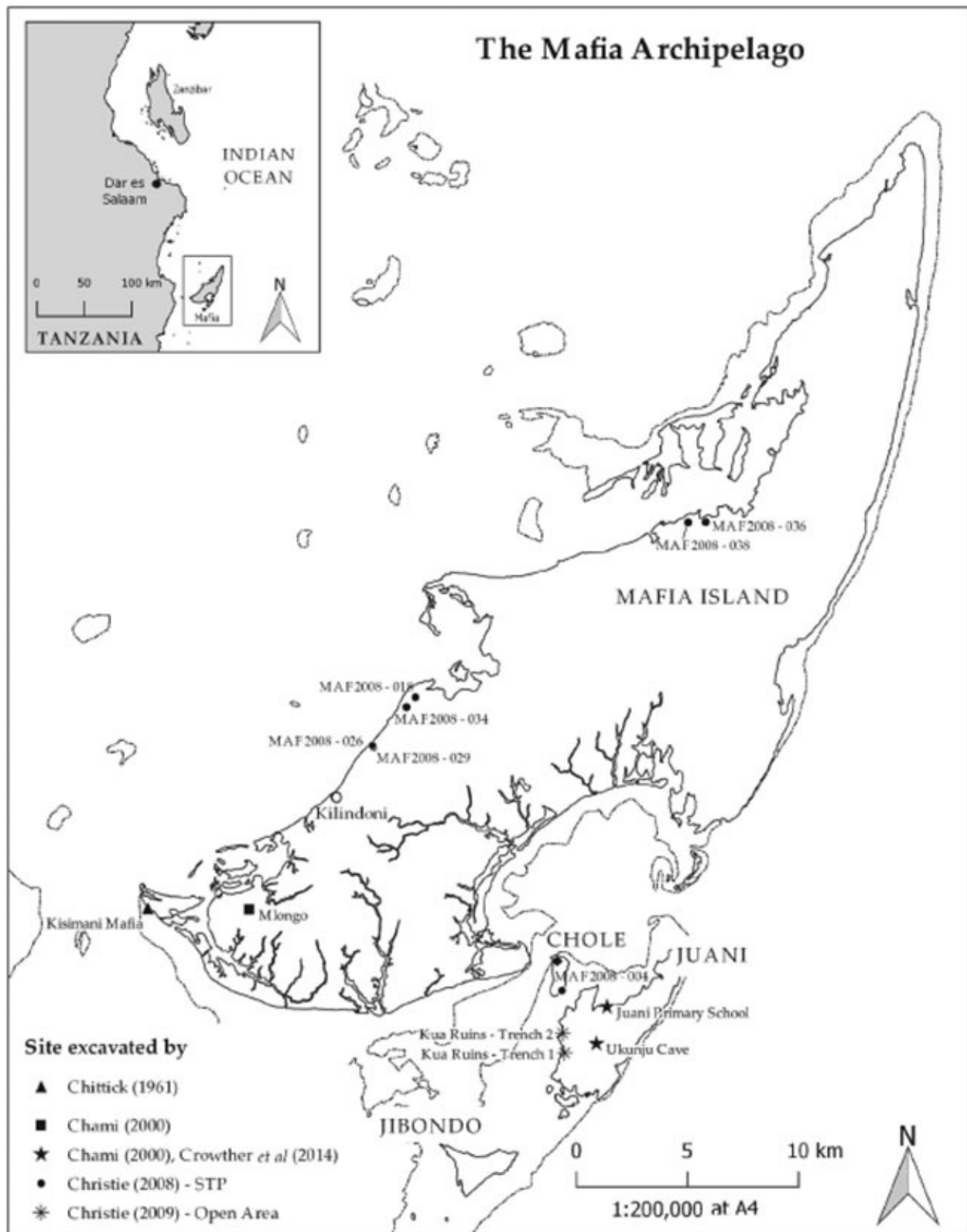
In combination, these surveys provide a good overview of settlement history and activities, enabling some general observations. There are fewer sites in the south of Mafia than the north. Yet the earliest sites are located here, on the Mtoni Terrace – a raised coral platform created partially due to changing sea levels (Shaghude 2004: 94). Chami (1999: 3) systematically targeted this environment for his survey, bringing success in locating early sites. Wynne-Jones' (2006) surveys were less selective; her claim that the southern part of the island is relatively free of archaeological sites is based on a different methodology.

Systematic survey recovered a denser pattern of settlement on the northwest coast (Wynne-Jones 2006: 8), a pattern reflected in my own research. These sites are less ephemeral and more temporally diverse, particularly from the eleventh century CE onward. The less accessible northeast coast requires further survey. The maritime sites recorded (Wynne-Jones 2006; Christie 2013b) document the diversity of shell species exploited by Mafian communities. Species selection was influenced by habitats in adjacent marine environments, and the presence of more stratified sites (for example, MAF2008–018), which demonstrate changes in species selection and enable potential assessment of changing marine environments (Christie 2013b).

Archaeological excavations

I carried out substantive excavations at six sites, with STPs opened at a further seven ([Table 23.2](#), [Figure 23.1](#)). These excavations address some questions raised by the surveys, while simultaneously highlighting areas for further research.

Sites dating to the Middle Iron Age (*c.* seventh to tenth centuries CE) have mostly been identified through excavation not survey (for example, MAF2008–004, Kinundu, Ukunju Cave and Juani Primary School) (Map 1, p. xxii; [Table 23.2](#)). These sites have clear evidence for MIA occupation, indicating continuous habitation of the islands from the early first millennium CE (Crowther *et al.* 2014: 41; *contra* Wynne-Jones 2006: 7). This demonstrates the importance of multi-faceted survey strategies, although identifying excavation areas remains challenging. Imported materials and trade goods were recovered from all substantive excavations, indicating ongoing active engagement with regional and international trade networks from the early first millennium CE (for example, Juani Primary School), through the growth and decline of the Swahili mercantile economy (for example, Kisimani Mafia and Kua), to more recent exchanges (for example, MAF2008–038).



[Figure 23.1](#) Map of Mafia showing sites excavated

Kisimani Mafia and Kua (Map 1, p. xxii) are the only stonetown sites in the archipelago. Oral traditions document a complex socio-political relationship between them, and between the occupants of Kua's main complex and the earlier adjacent settlement of Mkokotoni (Freeman-Grenville 1962). While both sites have traded items in

their deposits, Kisimani Mafia seemingly played a more active role in international exchange networks, with greater abundance of coins, imported pottery and beads among other items (Chittick 1961; Van Spengen 1980). The absence of a deep-water harbour may have restricted Kua's trade opportunities (Piggott 1941b: 5); it is also likely that Kisimani Mafia benefited from an intensification of trade because of its association with Kilwa. Further work is needed at Kisimani Mafia and Kua to clarify their relationship to each other, and their role in the socio-political organisation of the archipelago and wider region.

p.249

[Table 23.2](#) Summary of excavations conducted in the Mafia Archipelago 1950–2015

<i>Team/date</i>	<i>Site excavated</i>	<i>Area excavated</i>	<i>Sites/materials identified</i>	<i>Radiocarbon dates</i>
Chitrick (1957/ 1964)	Kisimani Mafia	Nine areas – six within/ around Mosque III; one test pit in each well; 1 isolated test pit into cliff section	- Local pottery: SW and PS - Imported pottery: <i>Sgniffiato</i>, celadon, blue- and green- glazed Islamic ware, white and blue-on-white Chinese porcelain and Eastern Mediterranean pottery - Foreign coins - Structural remains	
Chami (1997)	Mlongo, Mafia	Two trenches: 2 m × 3 m and 2 m × 2 m	- Local pottery: Kwale Ware, Plain Ware (PW) - Metallurgical debris	Single charcoal radiocarbon date – Radiocarbon Age: 1740 ±60 (3rd c. CE)
Chami (2000)	Kinundu Cave, Juani*	Two trenches: 1 m × 2 m and 1 m × 1 m	- Local pottery: Tana Tradition/Triangular Incised Ware (TT/TIW); SW, PS - Imported pottery: possible Indian EIA period - Faunal assemblages - Lithic assemblage	Two charcoal radiocarbon dates – Radiocarbon ages: 490 ±60 and 1330 ±60 (7th c. CE date indicated)
Chami (2000/ 2001)	Juani Primary School, Juani	Two seasons: Season 1 – two trenches: both 1 m × 2 m Season 2 – one trench: 5 m × 4 m	- Local pottery: Kwale and Limbo Ware, SW, PS - Shell beads - Metallurgical debris - Possible structural remains - Postholes	
Chami (2000)	Ukunju Cave, Juani	Two trenches: both 1 m × 2 m	- Local pottery: unspecified EIA forms, SW and PS - Imported pottery (various sources including India) - Faunal assemblages - Glass beads - Lithics	Two marine shell radiocarbon dates – Radiocarbon ages: 2480 ±60 and 2410 ± 60 (1421 CE and 668 CE respectively)**

Table 23.2 (continued)

Team/date	Site excavated	Area excavated	Sites/materials identified	Radiocarbon dates
Christie (2009)	Various sites: Mfiruni [4]; Kiringwe [2]; Chole Island [1];	Nine test pits at each of seven sites: 0.5 m × 0.5 m	- Local pottery: various traditions and dates - Imported pottery: porcelain ceramics - Faunal remains - Glass	
Christie (2009)	Kua Ruins, Juani	Three trenches: two 2 m × 3 m and one 1 m × 1 m trench; Nine STPs: 0.5 m × 0.5 m each	- Local pottery: SW and PS - Imported pottery: European, Middle Eastern and Chinese ceramics - Faunal assemblages - Shell, bone and glass beads - Metallurgical debris (iron slag) - Structural remains	Three charcoal radiocarbon dates – Radiocarbon ages: 531 ± 25; 470 ± 25 and 263 ± 30 (1325–1346 CE or 1393–1327 CE, 1415–1451 CE and 1619–1669 CE respectively)***
Sealinks (2012)	Ukunju Cave, Juani	One trench: 2.3 m × 2 m (narrowing to 2.3 m × 1.2 m) One sondage 90 cm × 60 cm	- Local pottery including TT/TIW (MIA) sherds - Imported pottery including Chinese and Sasanian Islamic pottery - Faunal assemblages - Shell, stone and glass beads - Archaeo-botanical remains: sorghum, millet, cowpea, baobab and cotton - Lithic materials associated with MIA deposits	Pending
Sealinks (2012)	Juani Primary School, Juani	Four trenches all 2 m × 2 m STP transects	- Local pottery: EIA and TT/TIW (MIA) sherds - Imported pottery: Middle Eastern Ceramics - Faunal assemblages - Archaeo-botanical remains: sorghum and cowpea - Shell and glass beads - Mofa cooking ovens	Pending

* In Chami (2000) the dates for Kinundu Cave are the same as those for Juani Primary School.

** There is some discussion as to the validity of these dates as the Marine Reservoir effect (ΔR) for this region has not been determined and is highly variable (see Crowther *et al.* 2014: 27).

*** The calibration curve for this period oscillates. Consequently, more date ranges are proposed. These are refined based on archaeological, architectural and historical dataset (see Christie 2013b).

More recent excavations (Christie 2013a; Crowther *et al.* 2014) have begun to elucidate past subsistence strategies using faunal and archaeo-botanical assemblages. These indicate that Mafian communities practised a mixed economy of marine and terrestrial resource use and agriculture. Excavations at Kua highlight intra-settlement variations in subsistence strategies, possibly reflecting differential access to resources influenced by socio-economic status (Christie 2013c: 116). As faunal datasets from more sites in the archipelago become available, it would be interesting to evaluate whether or how subsistence practices change over time. Regional trends point to changing marine exploitation strategies facilitating more intensive exploitation of offshore fish species in the early second millennium CE, in line with an increasing engagement with the sea (Fleisher *et al.* 2015: 110). Are these trends reflected in the wider archaeology of the archipelago? Though not recorded by Chittick (1961), there are substantial midden deposits at Kisimani Mafia that could help address this, research that should be prioritised as the site is subject to severe erosion.

Surveys at Kua (Christie 2013a, b, c) also demonstrate that later-period Swahili settlements (often overlooked regionally) have an interesting story to tell, adopting features from earlier settlements and introducing new styles present in even later settlements, but differing from both. Further work examining the development and organisation of Kua could inform our understanding of Swahili settlement development more generally.

Summary

In summary, the archipelago's archaeological potential has been increasingly recognised. Recent surveys and excavations provide conclusive evidence for continuous occupation from the early first millennium CE. They demonstrate that, far from being insular, Mafian communities played an active part in the Swahili world. This is only the beginning; further research can inform regional research agendas. These would include providing opportunities to document early evidence for maritime adaptation and engagement; to elucidate the archipelago's place in Indian Ocean trade networks during the florescence of the Swahili mercantile economy; to explore the development, organisation and activities of later Swahili settlements; and, finally, to address the influences of historic periods of external contact on present-day populations, practices and material culture.

References

- Baumann, O. 1957. 'Mafia Island'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 45: 1–24.
- Chami, F. 1998. 'Early iron working people's adaptation to the nearshore and offshore environment'. *MVITA* 7. Available online at:

- Chami, F. A. 1999. 'The Early Iron Age on Mafia Island and its relationship to the mainland'. *Azania* 34: 1–10.
- Chami, F. A. 2000. 'Further archaeological research on Mafia Island'. *Azania* 34: 208–14.
- Chami, F. A. 2004. 'The archaeology of Mafia Archipelago, Tanzania: new evidence for Neolithic trade links'. In *The African Archaeology Network Reports and Review: Studies in African Archaeology 4*, edited by F. A. Chami, G. Pwiti and C. Radimilahy, 73–101. Dar es Salaam: University of Dar es Salaam Press.
- Chittick, H. N. 1961. 'Kisimani Mafia: excavations at an island settlement on the East African coast'. Dar es Salaam: Department of Antiquities.
- Christie, A. C. 2011. 'Exploring the social context of maritime exploitation in the Mafia Archipelago, Tanzania: an archaeological perspective'. PhD diss., University of York.
- Christie, A. C. 2013a. 'Exploring the social context of maritime exploitation along the East African coast from the 14th–18th C. AD: recent research from the Mafia Archipelago'. In *Terra Australis: Historical Ecology and Marine Resource Use in the Indo-Pacific Region 39*, edited by R. Ono, A. Morrison and D. Addison, 97–122. Canberra: Australia National University.
- Christie, A. C. 2013b. 'Overview of work conducted in the Mafia Archipelago 2008–2010'. *Nyame Akuma* 79: 30–44.
- p.252
- Christie, A. C. 2013c. 'Refining the chronology of Kua Ruins: radiocarbon dates from the Mafia Archipelago, Tanzania'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 48 (4): 521–33, doi:10.1080/0067270X.2013.842666.
- Crowther, A., Horton, M., Kotarba-Morley, A., Prendergast, M., Quintana Morales, E., Wood, M., *et al.* 2014. 'Iron Age agriculture, fishing and trade in the Mafia Archipelago, Tanzania: new evidence from Ukunju Cave'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 49 (1): 21–44, doi:10.1080/0067270X.2013.878104.
- Fleisher, J., Lane, P., LaViolette, A., Horton, M., Pollard, E., Quintana Morales, E., *et al.* 2015. 'When did the Swahili become maritime?' *American Anthropologist* 117 (1): 100–15, doi:10.1111/aman.12171.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1962. *The Medieval History of the Coast of Tanganyika*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1975. *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the 1st to the Early 19th Centuries* (2nd Ed.). London: Clarendon Press.
- Jeffery, B. 2012. *Mafia Island Maritime and Underwater Cultural Heritage Survey*, March 2012, Fisheries (Bethesda). Dar es Salaam.
- King, N. 1917. 'Mafia'. *The Geographical Journal* 50 (2): 117–25.

- Piggott, D. W. 1941. 'Mafia: history and traditions (collected by Kadhi Amur Omar Saadi)'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 11: 35–40.
- Piggott, D. 1941. 'History and archaeology'. In *Mafia Island District Book*. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam National Archives.
- Revington, T. M. 1936. 'Some notes on the Mafia Island group'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 12: 23–7.
- Rhodes, D. 2010. *Historical Archaeologies of Nineteenth-Century Colonial Tanzania: A Comparative Study*. BAR International Series 2075. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Shaghude, Y. W. 2004. 'The study of sediment characteristics and nearshore sediment dynamism in coastal Tanzania: research report to the Institute of Marine Sciences, Zanzibar'. Report # IMS/2004/01. Available online at: <http://hdl.handle.net/1834/177>.
- Van Spengen, W. 1980. 'Structural characteristics of underdevelopment in the Mafia Archipelago: an historical analysis'. *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 20 (79): 331–53.
- Walley, C. J. 2002. "'They scorn us because we are uneducated": knowledge and power in a Tanzanian marine park'. *Ethnography* 3 (3): 265–698.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2006. *Reconstructing the Long Term History of the Mafia Archipelago*. Dar es Salaam, Antiquities Department.
- Wynne-Jones, S. and Mapunda, B. B. 2008. "'This is what pots look like here": ceramics, tradition and consumption on Mafia Island, Tanzania'. *Azania* 43 (1): 1–17.

24

KILWA KISIWANI AND SONGO MNARA

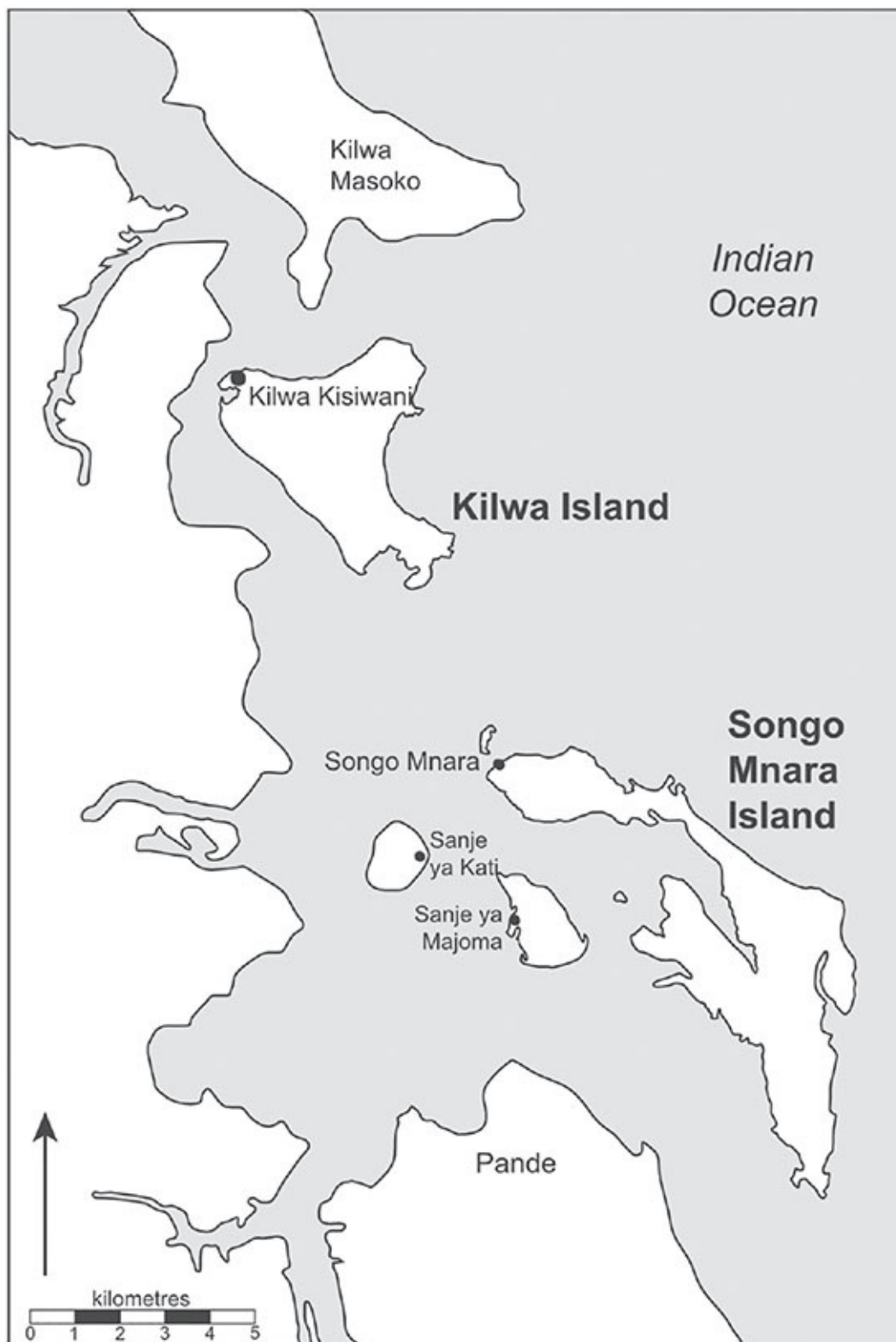
Stephanie Wynne-Jones

Kilwa Kisiwani occupies a special place in coastal history. The stonetown at Kilwa is one of the grandest on the coast; its architecture, particularly the domed Great Mosque and the palace of Husuni Kubwa, is unparalleled in its elegance and ambition. The nearby ruins at Songo Mnara, which can be considered part of the same urban configuration, contain mosques and domestic architecture of similar beauty. Kilwa is also the site linked to the earliest historical traditions, with the indigenous *Kilwa Chronicle* having been transcribed first by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century (Freeman-Grenville 1962: 89–93). A combination of these factors made Kilwa the candidate for one of the earliest large-scale archaeological excavations on the coast, which in turn meant that the chronology and development of Kilwa became paradigmatic for understandings of precolonial coastal urbanism. Although Kilwa may no longer stand as the prototypical stonetown, excavations carried out during the 1960s remain the source for our understanding of this particular regional story (Chittick 1974). This chapter therefore will review the information available from excavations at Kilwa, interpreted alongside historical sources. It will then outline some of the ways that more recent research has augmented our understanding of Kilwa Kisiwani, notably through research elsewhere in the archipelago.

Kilwa and its archipelago

The stonetown of Kilwa Kisiwani developed over approximately 1,000 years, on the northwestern tip of Kilwa Island, immediately facing the mainland ([Figure 24.1](#)). The first settlement of the site is difficult to pin down, but is likely to have dated to the ninth century CE, at which time Kilwa contained wattle-and-daub architecture and was probably a relatively humble fishing and farming community. It is from the eleventh century CE that the earliest stone-built components date: these are limited to the first iteration of the Great Mosque, now preserved as its northern extension, and some tombs in the Sake

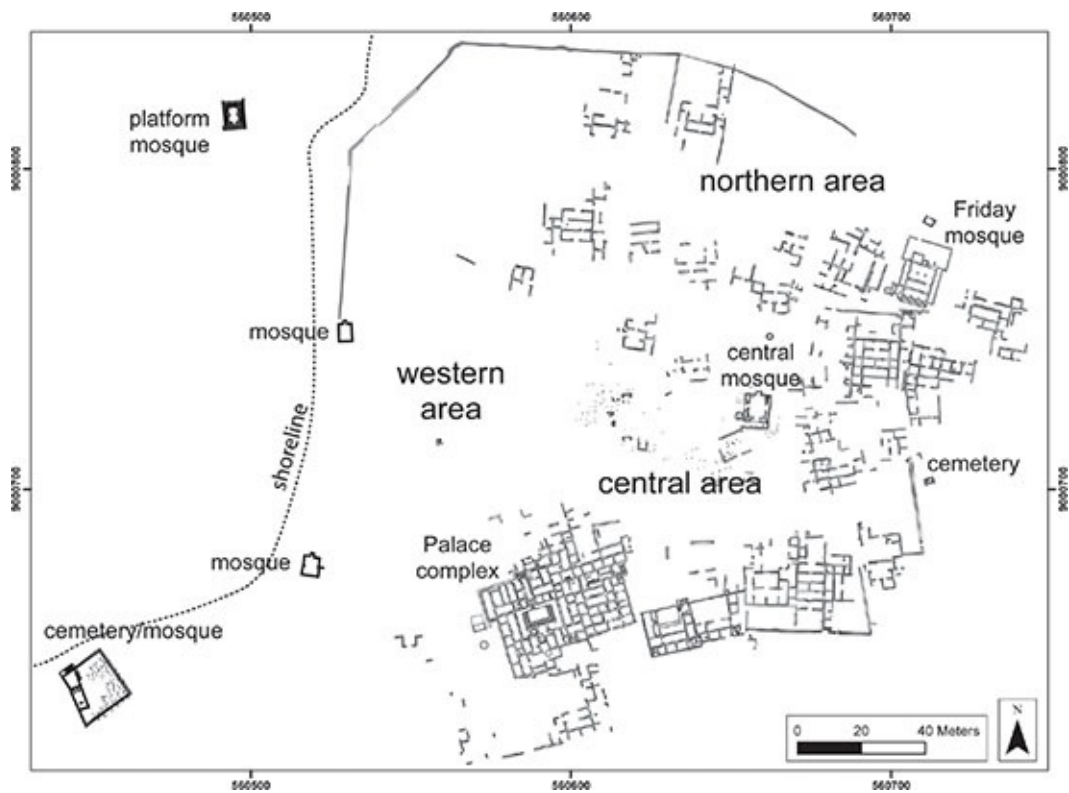
Cemetery (Chittick 1974: 237–8). Contemporary developments seem to have taken place on the nearby island of Sanje ya Kati, where stone houses may relate to this period. Sanje ya Kati was not a long-lived settlement; the encircling wall, which seems thirteenth century in origin, was built at the tail end of occupation here, before the site lapsed into obscurity (Chittick 1974: 238). In contrast, thirteenth-century Kilwa was experiencing a period of expansion, evidenced first in the construction of Husuni Ndogo. In the early fourteenth century the Great Mosque received the domed extension that makes it such a magnificent monument ([Figure 24.2](#)), and the palace of Husuni Kubwa was built – although never finished – on a bluff to the east of the earlier town. In the succeeding century, stone-built houses, presumably associated with a growing elite, supplemented the townscape. This was also the moment at which Songo Mnara was founded on a nearby island of the same name, containing multiple elegantly built houses and mosques of the fifteenth century, some of which mirror structures at Kilwa almost exactly ([Figure 24.3](#); Garlake 1966). This would seem to have been part of the same moment of urban expansion and architectural investment, and the two sites should be viewed in parallel. It was also during the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries that modifications of the island coastlines, including stone causeways, suggest the extension of urban territories at Kilwa to include maritime activity (Pollard 2008; Pollard *et al.* 2012).



[Figure 24.1](#) Map of the Kilwa Archipelago, showing sites mentioned in text (KK, SM, SyK)



[*Figure 24.2*](#) The domed Great Mosque at Kilwa Kisiwani



Histories

The historical record relating to Kilwa is one of the richest for the coast. It includes both the indigenous *Kilwa Chronicle* and a series of mentions by visitors to the region. The *Chronicle* exists in three versions, roughly similar, the earliest of which was transcribed by João de Barros in 1552 (Chittick 1966). Before (and after) that time, it would have existed as a set of oral traditions, relating to various named sultans and their deeds. The names of these sultans have largely been correlated with names on coin finds from Kilwa and elsewhere; Kilwa was one of the most prolific mints on the coast and Kilwa-type coins survive in their thousands (Walker 1936; Freeman-Grenville 1957; Chittick 1965). The chronicles also contain a wealth of detail relating to the building and occupation of the town of Kilwa. They relate to two dynasties, the earlier Shirazi and later Mahdali, who might also be linked to the major periods of urban development at Kilwa of the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. Ali bin al-Hasan is remembered as the founder of Kilwa, and named as one of a group of six brothers who sailed from Shiraz to found towns along the coast; this narrative is echoed in origin stories across the region. The story of Ali is now thought of as largely allegorical, invoking cultural connections with, and ancestral claims on, the Persian Gulf (Allen 1993; Horton and Middleton 2000). Yet, Ali himself was real, and was one of the most prolific minters of coinage, both of copper and of rare silver issues. Among the Mahdali sultans, al-Hasan bin Sulaiman is particularly celebrated in the chronicles, remembered as a beneficent and pious leader. He was responsible for the construction of Husuni Kubwa, a massive architectural statement unparalleled on the coast.

The arrival of the Portuguese at Kilwa in 1505 CE marked the start of its downfall. The sixteenth century is poorly resolved in both history and archaeology, but it seems Kilwa went into rapid decline due to Portuguese influence: economic control of the southern coast, military control of ports like Kilwa, and perhaps also the arrival of disease. The Portuguese did, however, create a fascinating set of histories which record Kilwa (and the rest of the coast) at this moment, and speak of the sumptuous society they encountered, rich in material goods, foodstuffs, cloth and precious metals (Chittick 1974: 241–3; Prestholdt 1998). Although this was a moment of transition for Kilwa in particular, whose riches had rested on the gold trade with southern Africa, the arrival of the Portuguese does provide a fascinating picture of precolonial Swahili society at the moment of encounter.

Histories of the eighteenth century also relate a brief revival of Kilwa's fortunes as a supplier of slaves to the French plantations on the Mascarene Islands (Freeman-Grenville

1965). This was to be a short-lived venture, eclipsed during the period of Omani control by the installation of an Omani governor and the construction of a new port at Kilwa Kivinje to the north.

Archaeological excavations

Excavations at Kilwa were on a massive scale, with the clearance of huge amounts of earth that overlay the major monuments and houses. The traces of first-millennium settlement were excavated almost by chance in the environs of the Great Mosque (Chittick 1974: 27). Privileging of historical sources went together with a focus on the big picture of urban growth, as archaeology was brought to bear on understanding the changing fortunes of Kilwa's elite, and the direction of their connections with the outside world. Excavations focused on the major monuments, and on the clearance of the mosques, houses and the palace at Husuni Kubwa. Artefacts were of course recorded as part of the process of clearing the structures, and massive quantities of everyday ceramics were recorded alongside coins, beads, metalwork and imported goods. These latter objects were used to tell the story of Kilwa writ large, and the imported goods were invaluable as sources of relative dates, based on better-established chronologies from kiln sites in the Middle East and China. Yet the mundane ceramics – dubbed 'Kitchen Ware' by Chittick – were also used to create a typology that remains useful today. They evoked a rich history of specialised production, with decorative ceramic types such as painted bowls, unique to Kilwa and its archipelago.

p.257

This archaeological record gave a picture of a rich trading society that thrived at Kilwa from the eleventh century onwards. The numbers of imported ceramics seem to have been surprisingly low. They were not quantified, but seem never to have been more than 1–2 per cent of the total assemblage. Yet, the archaeology of the site evokes the rich, Islamic, connected society described in the histories. Key testament to that is in the surviving architecture and the richest record of imported ceramics is actually cemented into the ceilings of some of the buildings; over 300 Persian glazed bowls adorned the ceiling of the House of the Portico, for example.

Yet, by focusing on the chronology and construction of the major monuments, excavations at Kilwa Kisiwani failed to answer some basic questions about the site. One such question (acknowledged by the excavator) is the extent of the former town, which remains vague; the town plan revealed through excavation shows large blank spaces between structures and no evidence for the limits of the town. It is likely that these spaces would have been populated by wattle-and-daub and coral architecture (Fleisher *et al.* 2012); small test excavations in the area between the main town and Husuni Kubwa have also

recovered evidence for metalworking (Chami 2006). There is also almost no information from Kilwa Kisiwani about aspects of daily life, partly through a lack of attention and partly due to the archaeological practice of the time when it was excavated.

Songo Mnara

This situation has been ameliorated by research elsewhere in the Kilwa region, and notably on the neighbouring island of Songo Mnara (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2010, 2011). The fourteenth–sixteenth-century stonetown of Songo Mnara has been the subject of extensive multi-scalar archaeological investigations aimed at exploring daily practice in and around the structures of the town. Songo Mnara itself is an enigmatic settlement, with an apparent emphasis on the spiritual life; there are six mosques and large numbers of graves and tombs throughout the site and clustered in the central spaces. It was also a busy urban place, and excavations combined with geoarchaeological sampling and survey have shown evidence for a range of craftworking, agricultural and productive activities both inside the houses and in the surrounding spaces (Wynne-Jones 2013; Fleisher 2014). For example, geochemical signatures combined with shovel test pitting have recovered evidence for a significant shell and stone bead industry in the western open area immediately within the town gates (Fleisher and Sulas 2015). Full-scale excavation of both coral and wattle-and-daub houses within the city walls, combined with geochemical and phytolith sampling, have shown that crop processing was occurring within the houses, along with spinning of cotton and other economic activities. Spaces outside the houses might have been linked to tanning or to pigment use (Wynne-Jones 2013). By these means, it has been possible to build up a picture of the economic life of the town, which reflects back on contemporary practices at Kilwa. Analysis of faunal and plant remains has shown a mixed diet of fishing and farming, and a predominance of local crops such as millet. This knowledge of the local economy has been combined with a contextual approach to the artefact record, incorporating objects such as Kilwa-type coins in a consideration of value and use (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2012), and exploring the record of imported ceramics as part of the overall assemblage of ceramics rather than as an indication of the direction and volume of trade.

p.258

The town of Kilwa

It is therefore now possible to consider life at Kilwa Kisiwani from a variety of angles, as part of a network of settlement across the Kilwa Archipelago. On the adjacent mainland, survey suggests there was also a web of connected rural settlement that likely contributed to the plant and animal resources used in daily life on the island (Wynne-Jones 2007). The monuments of Kilwa and its rich archaeological record combine with the detail available from more recent research on Songo Mnara, and along the surrounding coastline, to

provide an understanding of the town. Kilwa was outward-looking, and its historical record suggests both its connections with a wider world and its vision of itself as a cosmopolitan player in the Islamic Indian Ocean. The archaeological record shows how that vision was supported by the construction of a grand townscape, which colonised the nearby archipelago and its coastlines, but distanced itself from the rural mainland at its back. Yet it also shows that the inhabitants of Kilwa and Songo Mnara were embedded within an agricultural and maritime landscape, and local traditions of craft manufacture that were practised within the town. At both sites the low quantities of imports stand in contrast to the suggestions from historical sources of a significant trade in southern African gold, and of the materially rich society encountered by the Portuguese. This contradiction is difficult to resolve, but may suggest that the extroverted nature of Kilwa society was in some ways a local affair (Wynne-Jones 2016), a measure of what Kilwa thought of itself, rather than an index of the volume of trade during any particular period.

References

- Allen, J. de V. 1993. *Swahili Origins*. London: James Currey.
- Chami, F. 2006. 'The archaeology of pre-Islamic Kilwa Kisiwani (Island)'. In *The African Archaeology Network: Research in Progress*, edited by J. Kinahan and J. Kinahan, 119–50. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press.
- Chittick, H. N. 1965. 'The "Shirazi" colonization of East Africa'. *Journal of African History* 6 (3): 275–94.
- Chittick, H. N. 1966. 'Two traditions about the early history of Kilwa'. *Azania* 3: 197–200.
- Chittick, H. N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Fleisher, J. 2014. 'The complexity of public space at the Swahili town of Songo Mnara, Tanzania'. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 35: 1–22.
- Fleisher, J. and Sulas, F. 2015. 'Deciphering public spaces in urban contexts: geophysical survey, multi-element soil analysis and artifact distributions at the 15th–16th-century AD Swahili settlement of Songo Mnara, Tanzania'. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 55: 55–70.
- Fleisher, J., Wynne-Jones, S., Steele, C. and Welham, K. 2012. 'Geophysical survey at Kilwa Kisiwani, Tanzania'. *Journal of African Archaeology* 10 (2): 207–20.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1957. 'Coinage in East Africa before Portuguese times'. *Numismatic Chronicle* (6th series) 17: 151–79.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1962. *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the First to the Earlier Nineteenth Centuries*. London: Clarendon Press.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1965. *The French at Kilwa Island*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Garlake, P. S. 1966. *The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast*. London: Oxford

University Press.

- Horton, M. C. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Pollard, E. 2008. 'The maritime landscape of Kilwa Kisiwani and its region, Tanzania, 11th to 15th century AD'. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 27 (3): 265–80.
- Pollard, E., Fleisher, J. B. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2012. 'Beyond the stone town: maritime architecture at fourteenth–fifteenth-century Songo Mnara, Tanzania'. *Journal of Maritime Archaeology* 7 (1): 43–62.
- Prestholdt, J. 1998. *As Artistry Permits and Custom May Ordain: The Social Fabric of Material Consumption in the Swahili World, circa 1450 to 1600*. PAS Working Papers #3, Northwestern University.
- p.259
- Walker, J. 1936. 'The history of the coinage of the Sultans of Kilwa'. *Numismatic Chronicle* (5th series) 16: 43–81.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2007. 'It's what you do with it that counts: performed identities in the East African coastal landscape'. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 7 (3): 325–45.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2013. 'The public life of the Swahili stonehouse'. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 32: 759–73.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2016. *A Material Culture: Precolonial Consumption and Materiality on the East African Coast*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wynne-Jones, S. and Fleisher, J. B. 2010. 'Archaeological investigations at Songo Mnara, Tanzania, 2009'. *Nyame Akuma* 73: 2–8.
- Wynne-Jones, S. and Fleisher, J. B. 2011. 'Archaeological investigations at Songo Mnara, Tanzania, 2011'. *Nyame Akuma* 76: 3–8.
- Wynne-Jones, S. and Fleisher, J. B. 2012. 'Coins in context: local economy, value and practice on the East African Swahili coast'. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 22 (1): 19–36.

25

MIKINDANI AND THE SOUTHERN COAST

Matthew Pawlowicz

Introduction

The archaeology of the Swahili coast south of Kilwa has not been studied as extensively or as long as have other Swahili regions. Important work at the margins of the southern Swahili coast at Chibuene, on Madagascar, and in the Comoros Islands is well-known (see Ekblom and Sinclair; Wright; Radimilahy, this volume), but research on the southern coast proper has been later in coming. Pioneering work in northern Mozambique (Adamowicz 1985, 1987; Duarte 1993) was slowed by political conflict and resumed only recently (for example, Madiquida 2005). The Tanzanian coast between Kilwa and the Rovuma River saw little archaeological work owing to logistical difficulties, assumptions that settlements came relatively late and followed patterns known from elsewhere, and the shadow cast by Kilwa itself – both in actual historical terms and in imagined historiographical ones. This gap was filled first by Amandus Kwekason of the National Museums of Tanzania (Chami and Kwekason 2003; Kwekason 2007, 2011) and shortly thereafter by myself (Pawlowicz 2009, 2011, 2012). Each of these efforts drew attention to the area around Mikindani ([Figure 25.1](#)), a historic port town that attained its greatest prominence in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but had a longer history of settlement. These initial works stimulated subsequent projects tackling different sites and questions, from environmental reconstruction to cultural heritage (for example, Stoetzel 2015; Ichumbaki and Pollard 2015).

While work here is still in its early stages, its archaeology has already made important contributions to Swahili history. In particular, it highlights a historical trajectory for coastal populations in the region different from that described by standard Swahili narratives. This overview will highlight some of the most significant findings and developments from research at Mikindani and along the southern coast. Specifically, it will discuss evidence for early settlement in the region, the separation of this part of the coast from Indian Ocean influences in the first half of the second millennium CE, and its

reintegration into Swahili networks in the latter part of that millennium.

Early settlement along the southern coast

p.261



[*Figure 25.1*](#) View of contemporary Mikindani

One of the reasons this part of the coast was mostly ignored for so long is the expectation that permanent settlement in the area would have come relatively late. The area around the modern Tanzania/Mozambique border is towards the southern end of the monsoon region of eastern Africa and receives lighter and less reliable rains than areas further north. Coupled with assumptions of tsetse infestation, the local climate was argued to have blunted the extension of agricultural populations into the region, which would instead have been sparsely populated by mobile hunter-gatherer populations (for example, Phillipson 1977). Archaeological work along the coast has indeed found evidence of Late Stone Age forager populations (Adamowicz 1987; Kwekason 2011: 138–9; Pawlowicz

2011). However, the expectation of late and sparse settlement demanded empirical confirmation in the wake of early settlements found elsewhere along the Tanzanian coast, perhaps most notably Felix Chami's (1994) work in the Rufiji Delta. As archaeological work on the southern coast began in earnest, ceramic finds from salvage projects offered intriguing material culture evidence for pre-ironworking settlements, albeit from disturbed contexts (Chami and Kwekason 2003). These suggestions were subsequently confirmed by the recovery of one such settlement at Mnaida Hill, located just above Mikindani, dated to approximately 2200 bp (Kwekason 2007). In recent years additional pre-ironworking settlements such as Litingi Channel near Mikindani (Pawlowicz 2011) and Kitere (Kwekason 2011) have been recovered (Map 1, p. xxii).

Despite such evidence for pre-ironworking settled communities along the southern coast, archaeology in both Tanzania and Mozambique indicates that coastal life underwent profound changes in the first centuries CE with the advent of the Iron Age. In the region around Mikindani, six settlements have been recovered dating to the mid-first millennium CE (Pawlowicz 2011, 2012). They yielded notable amounts of iron slag. They were situated on some of the region's most fertile land and bore evidence for the cultivation of African domesticates such as millet and sorghum, indicating they were home to farmers. From a material culture standpoint, the inhabitants produced a local variant of Kwale Ware, a common Early Iron Age ceramic type on the coast (Pawlowicz 2013; Figure 25.2a). In the latter half of the millennium the Mikindani region's inhabitants engaged in Indian Ocean trade, obtaining Middle Eastern imported ceramics. In the same period, some settlement locations shifted towards the sea.

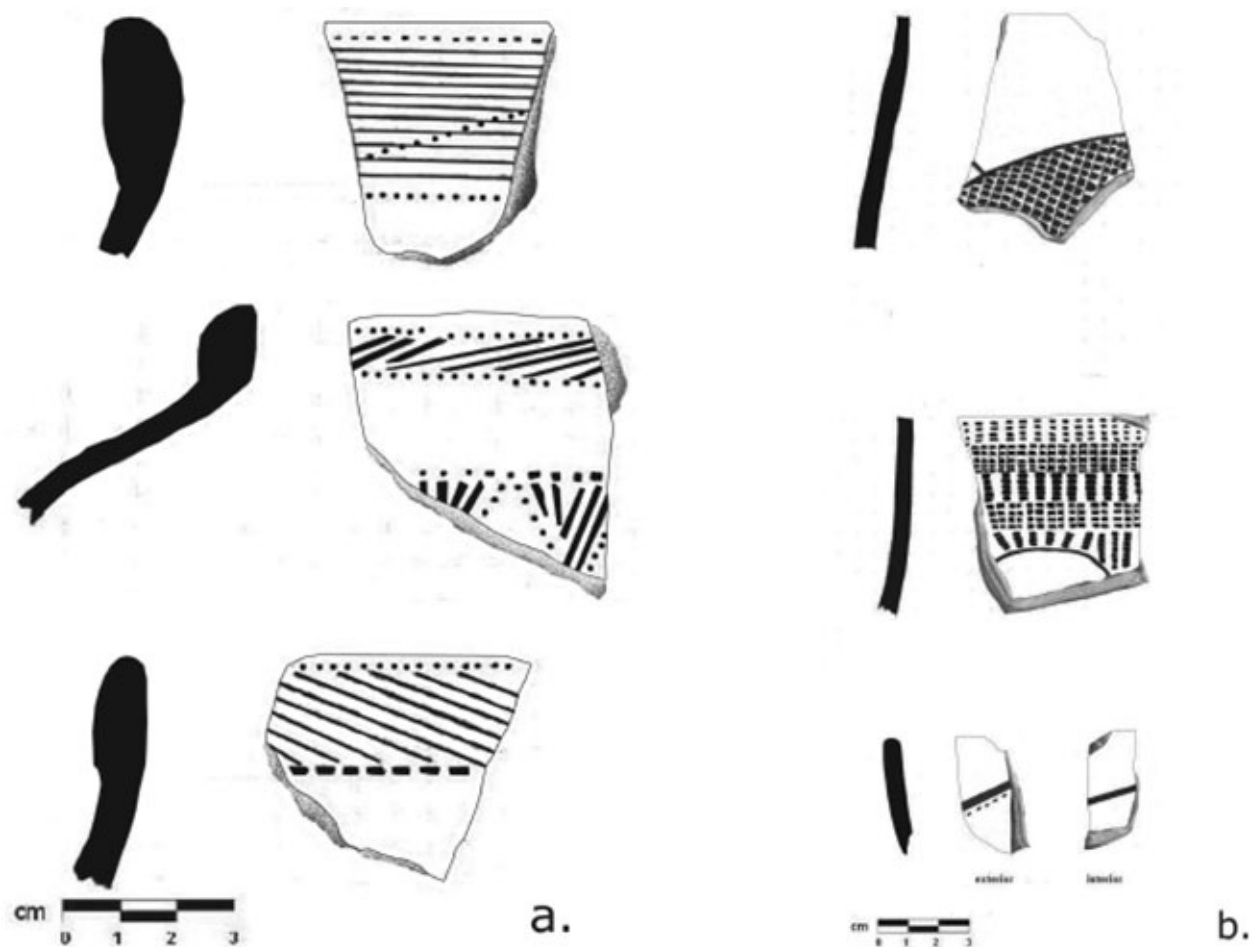
p.262

Similar material has been recorded elsewhere in southern Tanzania outside the Mikindani region at Mnangole (Kwekason 2011). The same holds for northern Mozambique, where the earliest Iron Age ceramics show strong affinities with Kwale (Sinclair *et al.* 1993), but were replaced by local varieties such as Nampula and Monapo from the mid-first millennium. Taken together with evidence from Chibuene and the Comoros, it seems clear that southern-coast communities participated in Indian Ocean cultural and economic networks in the latter part of the first millennium CE, sharing in developments that archaeologists use to define early Swahili culture. At the same time, idiosyncrasies in local ceramics (see Sinclair *et al.* 1993; Pawlowicz 2013) and relatively low numbers of imported goods (Pawlowicz 2012: 492) suggest regional variability and emerging differences from coastal patterns further north, a trend that would develop further in the second millennium.

Distinctiveness in the early second millennium

The early second millennium was a period of florescence for many Swahili communities, as they increased their participation in Indian Ocean trade networks and reaped the benefits of growing wealth and access to Middle Eastern Islamic culture. Yet the second millennium was also a period of increasing regional differentiation, with notable differences emerging even among broadly shared trends in material culture. This differentiation was driven by competition between coastal centres, which existed as independent entities and maintained unique relationships in the Indian Ocean system.

Though regionalism increased in the early second millennium along the entire coast, shifts on the southern coast were especially striking. The Mikindani region, which is the best known archaeologically, departed from Swahili norms across many measures. It failed to adopt rice agriculture or depend on domesticated livestock, as took place further north. There was no evidence for mosques or Islam before 1500 CE. Urban development did not appear in the region until the latter half of the millennium, nor did the kinds of settlement hierarchies that would support such development. Many of these departures seem to have been mirrored in communities along the coast in northern Mozambique (Duarte 1993) and elsewhere in Tanzania south of Kilwa (Kwekason 2011). While much of the Swahili coast was becoming more urban and cosmopolitan (LaViolette 2008), Mikindani and the southern coast were not. The evidence that provides the most insight into this distinction comes from ceramics.



[Figure 25.2](#) Local ceramics from (a) the Early Iron Age and (b) the early second millennium along the southern coast

Mikindani's inhabitants developed a new style of local ceramics, diverging from broad trends in northern coastal ceramics. Instead, this region showed connections to wares produced along the Rovuma River watershed that stretches across southern Tanzania and northern Mozambique into Malawi (Pawlowicz 2013). The Mikindani style was characterised by relatively thin-walled, well-fired necked pots and open bowls, with flattened, tapered rims and large areas covered with stamped or impressed decorations (Figure 25.2b). Such ceramics closely resemble Mwamasapa ceramics from northern Malawi (Robinson 1982) and those found at Lumbo Tradition sites in northern Mozambique, such as Somana, Foz do Lurio, Ibo Island and the Lumbo type-site itself (Duarte 1993). Strikingly, early second-millennium inhabitants of the southern coast did not incorporate the imported ceramics commonly found elsewhere on the coast. While imported glass beads have been recovered from sites along the coast in southern Tanzania and northern Mozambique, no early second-millennium imported ceramic has yet been recovered in the Mikindani region – in contrast with more than 13,000 local ceramic sherds from that period (Pawlowicz 2011). Imported ceramics are exceedingly rare elsewhere on the southern coast at this time as well, with a single noteworthy sherd of sgraffiato reported from Sudi, a town located 20 km up the coast from Mikindani

(Ichumbaki and Pollard 2015), and none described in surveys of northern Mozambique (Duarte 1993). Taken together, patterns in local and imported ceramics suggest that communities along the coast in southern Tanzania and northern Mozambique were emphasising interior connections above those with the Indian Ocean during the early second millennium, virtually the opposite of the pattern further north.

Reintegration in the later second millennium

This pattern of divergence from Swahili norms in the early second millennium CE was not, in the end, permanent. Instead, the inhabitants of Mikindani and the southern coast reintegrated into Indian Ocean networks beginning in the sixteenth century. Communities around Mikindani Bay began to acquire Indian Ocean-imported ceramics including Chinese porcelain and various Indian earthenwares. They started making and using ceramics with affinities to Swahili Ware (see Chami 1998), particularly red-painted open bowls with graphite decorations, alongside the distinct earlier forms. There is clear evidence – for the first time – of Islamic practice, in the form of mosques and tombs (Johnston 1947). Similar evidence has been recovered in northern Mozambique from sites belonging to the Sancul Tradition, such as Gomene and the upper levels of Ibo Island (Duarte 1993), as well as elsewhere in southern Tanzania at Sudi and the top layers at Mnangole (Kwekason 2011: 82–3; Ichumbaki and Pollard 2015). Still, coastal communities maintained important connections to the interior as well, indicated by local ceramics and oral traditions (Pawlowicz and LaViolette 2013).

p.264

With reintegration into Indian Ocean networks, and the opportunities that Kilwa's decline opened for southern towns, the latter half of the second millennium witnessed substantial growth for Mikindani, Sudi and other coastal communities. These towns took advantage of shifting economic patterns, in particular the sale of enslaved individuals into the Indian Ocean plantation system during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Alpers 1975). As a result, the economic apex for Mikindani and Sudi was later than that in most other Swahili towns, but matched similar port communities such as Bagamoyo and Kilwa Kivinje. The inhabitants of Mikindani and Sudi were clearly understood as being Swahili in the historical records of the time (Gray 1950; Alpers 1975), indicating that however different their early second-millennium histories had been, the southern coast was certainly part of the larger Swahili world.

Conclusion and future directions

The archaeology and history of Mikindani and the southern coast thus provides us with

further evidence of diversity in the Swahili world. The early second-millennium mercantilism, cosmopolitanism and Islamic practice so important to defining the Swahili further north did not hold for the southern coast. Instead, conditions on the southern coast enabled other connections to flourish, which were remembered in local oral histories that claimed African founders for coastal communities and enduring connections with interior groups (Pawlowicz and LaViolette 2013). And yet the region was no less ‘Swahili’ upon reintegrating into Indian Ocean networks in the latter part of the second millennium. Understanding the different pasts of individual regions enables us better to appreciate the fullness of coastal history.

References

- Adamowicz, L. 1985. *Report and Comments on the Progress of the CIPRIANA 81/85 Archaeological Project, Nampula Province*. Maputo: Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Textos para Debate 6.
- Adamowicz, L. 1987. ‘Projecto “CIPRIANA” 1981–1985’. *Trabalhos de Arqueologia e Antropologia* 3: 47–144.
- Alpers, E. 1975. *Ivory and Slaves: Changing Pattern of International Trade in East Central Africa to the Later 19th Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Chami, F. A. 1994. *The Tanzanian Coast in the First Millennium ad: An Archaeology of the Iron-Working, Farming Communities*. Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis.
- Chami, F. A. 1998. ‘A review of Swahili archaeology’. *African Archaeological Review* 15 (3): 199–218.
- Chami, F. A. and Kwekason, A. 2003. ‘Neolithic pottery traditions from the islands, the coast and the interior of East Africa’. *African Archaeological Review* 20 (2): 65–80.
- Duarte, R. 1993. *Northern Mozambique in the Swahili World*. Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis.
- Gray, Sir J. 1950. ‘Mikindani Bay before 1887’. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 28: 29–37.
- Ichumbaki, E. B. and Pollard, E. 2015. ‘Potsherds coated with lime mortar along the East African coast: their origin and significance’. *African Archaeological Review* 32 (3): 443–63.
- Johnston, P. H. 1947. ‘Mtwara Bay’. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 24: 61–5.

p.265

- Kwekason, A. 2007. ‘Pre-early iron working sedentary communities on the southern coast of Tanzania’. In *Settlements, Economies and Technology in the African Past*, edited by G. Pwiti, C. Radimilahy and F. Chami, 20–40. Dar es Salaam: African Archaeological Network.
- Kwekason, A. 2011. *Holocene Archaeology of the Southern Coast of Tanzania*. Dar es Salaam: E&D Vision Publishing.

- LaViolette, A. 2008. 'Swahili cosmopolitanism in Africa and the Indian Ocean world, AD 600–1500'. In *The Archaeology of Colonialism and Contested Modernities*, edited by C. Cobb and D. Loren, 24–49. *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress* 4 (1).
- Madiquida, H. 2005. *The Iron-Using Communities of the Cape Delgado Coast from 1000 ad*. Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis.
- Pawlowicz, M. 2009. 'Archaeological exploration of the Mikindani region of the southern Tanzanian coast'. *Nyame Akuma* 72: 41–51.
- Pawlowicz, M. 2011. 'Finding their place in the Swahili world: an archaeological exploration of southern Tanzania'. PhD diss., University of Virginia.
- Pawlowicz, M. 2012. 'Models of the Swahili past: the archaeology of Mikindani, southern coastal Tanzania'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 47 (4): 486–506.
- Pawlowicz, M. 2013. 'Review of ceramics from Tanzania, Malawi and northern Mozambique with implications for Swahili society'. *African Archaeological Review* 30 (4): 367–98.
- Pawlowicz M. and LaViolette, A. 2013. 'Swahili historical chronicles from an archaeological perspective: bridging history and archaeology, and coast and hinterland, in southern Tanzania'. In *The Death of Prehistory*, edited by P. Schmidt and S. Mrozowski, 117–40. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Phillipson, D. W. 1977. *The Later Prehistory of Eastern and Southern Africa*. London: Heinemann.
- Robinson, K. R. 1982. *Iron Age of Northern Malawi: An Archaeological Reconnaissance*. Malawi Government Ministry of Education and Culture, Department of Antiquities Publication No. 20.
- Sinclair, P. J. J., Morais, J. M. F., Adamowicz, L. and Duarte, R. T. 1993. 'A perspective on archaeological research in Mozambique'. In *The Archaeology of Africa: Foods, Metals, Towns*, edited by T. Shaw, P. J. J. Sinclair, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, 409–31. London: Routledge.
- Stoetzel, J. 2015. 'Silica bodies, Swahili lives: the reconstruction of three East African coastal landscapes through phytolith analysis, AD 600 to the present'. PhD diss., University of Virginia.

26

THE COMOROS AND THEIR EARLY HISTORY

Henry T. Wright

Introduction: the Comoros in African and Indian Ocean contexts

In the Zira'at, the congregational mosque of the abandoned town of Old Sima on the island of Nzwani, there was once a large rectangular four-legged basin carved from chlorite-schist, a metamorphic stone found on the east coast of Madagascar, which was used for washing before prayers. In the modern village of Sima, I was told the following story regarding the origin of this basin: 'One day, a woman of Sima was foraging on the reef for fish and shellfish. She saw a strange boat, from which a demon called to her and said "My baby is ill, and needs medicine from the forest. I am of the sea and know nothing of the land. You are a land person, and know the plants of the forest. If you go to the forest and bring the plants my baby needs, I will give you a gift". The woman went into the forest and returned with the necessary plants, the baby recovered, and she was given the magical basin, which has remained in Sima to this day' (Ahmadi Bourhane, Sima, personal communication 1984; cf. Hébert 2000). Indeed, 30 years ago, one could see the fragments of the now-broken basin near the Zira'at. This story emphasises the widespread dualism of the land people and the sea people, different and yet interdependent, and connects the 'sea people' to Madagascar through the datum of the chlorite schist basin.

This chapter summarises research on the earliest farming and fishing peoples of the Comoros – the people of land and sea – and their place in the Swahili world. The Comorian Archipelago is an intimate part of that world. Even today Comorian scholars study, teach and preach in Mombasa and Dar es Salaam, buy and sell goods and materials throughout the Indian Ocean, and serve as mariners on ships in every ocean, as their ancestors did more than a millennium ago. However, because of an accident of nineteenth-century colonialism, they are part of the Francophone world, and their extraordinary history and cultural contributions are not well known to many of the

The origins of Comorian settlement

The languages spoken on the archipelago provide a baseline for discussing early settlement. Most speech communities on the islands today use African Bantu languages of the Sabaki group. Within this group Comorian is most closely related to Pokomo and Mijikenda of the north Kenya coast but had early interactions with Swahili and other languages of the eastern African coast (Nurse and Spear 1985: 65–66; Walsh, this volume). Unfortunately, it is not clear when proto-Comorian split from the other Northern Sabaki languages; however, a historical tradition of Ngazija (Chouzour 1982: 21; Ben Ali 1984: 28) recounts how early visitors met people on the beach of M'beni in the far south of Ngazija who said they were 'Wanyika' (people of the forest) from the east coast of Africa. The names of their leaders indicate that they were speakers of Bantu languages.

p.267

In contrast, some speech communities on Maore speak dialects of Malagasy, a language the closest relatives of which are in Indonesia. The predominant speech community is the Sakalava dialect close to those of the west coast of Madagascar, undoubtedly emplaced by Sakalava princes and their troops fleeing conflict in Madagascar during the early nineteenth century. However, a few communities identify as 'Antalaotse' (people of the sea), a group involved in trade in the Indian Ocean (Rantoandro 1983), and who speak a dialect most closely related to Malagasy spoken in the west-central coast near Majunga (Gueunier 1976: 85, 2004: 406), an area with Islamised merchant communities since the fourteenth century CE (Vérin 1975). The Antalaotse were certainly present before the Sakalava, but how long before is not documented. It is notable that on Maore three of the most prominent mountain peaks (which often have names in earlier languages) have names that can be understood as Malagasy: the highest, *Bénara* (very cold), the most prominent, *Choungui* (needle), and the easternmost, *Maevadoany* (green palace or green tomb). The word *doany* is, however, also common in Sakalava dialects and is ultimately a loan from Arabic or Persian, probably via Swahili or Comorian. It may be a toponym given by more recent Sakalava arrivals. These are issues that deserve further study by historical linguists.

Modern genetics promises to give us evidence of human relationships completely independent of the language evidence. Recent studies of the genetic heritage of modern Comorians (Gourjon *et al.* 2011; M'Saidie *et al.* 2011) show contributions predominantly from Africa, with lesser amounts from the Near East and Southeast Asia. While studies of modern DNA can reveal some of the complexity of genetic heritage, they will not clearly indicate when population exchanges occurred, even with more thorough sampling of the

populations of the archipelago. Studies of ancient DNA, which could date the appearance of new genetic elements, have not yet been undertaken. For the moment, we must rely on the evidence of past cultures and contacts provided by archaeology. Before focusing on the results of archaeology, however, we need to consider the natural environment found by the first settlers.

The natural milieu of the Comorian Archipelago

The Comorian Archipelago spans 265 km in the northern end of the Mozambique Channel ([Figure 26.1](#)). Its westernmost member – high and still active Ngazija (Grande Comore) – is at the nearest 300 km from the African coast and a voyage of 740 km from Zanzibar: about three days' direct sail by outrigger or dhow in the steady winds of the austral winter. Each of the Comoros is visible from its neighbours and one could sail between Ngazija, passing Mwali (Moheli) and Nzwani (Anjouan) to Maore (Mayotte), but the currents between the islands are treacherous. The easternmost of the Comoros, low and reef-girded Maore, is 305 km from Madagascar, an easy winter voyage of a night and a day according to Mahorais fisherman. The Comoros could have served as a route for Holocene hunter-gatherers to travel to Madagascar more than 4,000 years ago (Dewar *et al.* 2013). It is not surprising that peoples from both Africa and Madagascar have contributed to the genetic, linguistic and material mosaic of Comorian life.

p.268

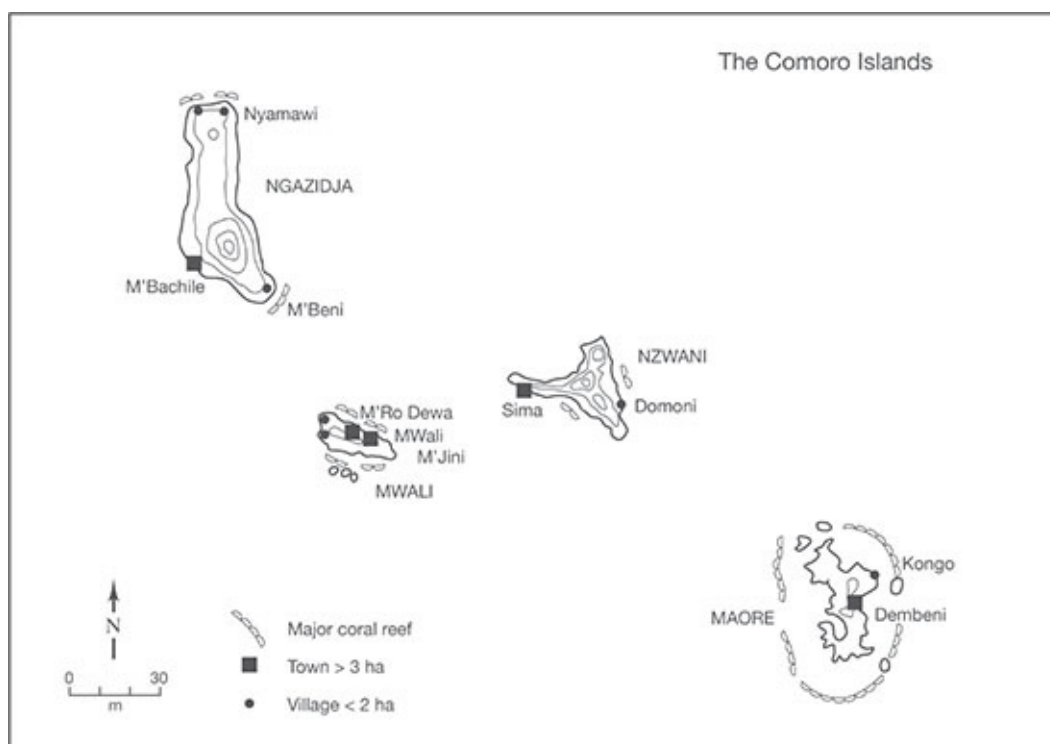


Figure 26.1 The Comoros in the eighth to tenth centuries; only major sites are shown

Geological research shows that Madagascar drifted south and west to its present position off the coast of Africa (and the Mozambique Channel assumed its present form) about 140 million years ago (Emerick and Duncan 1982; Nougier *et al.* 1986). The volcanic eruptions that created Maore started more than ten million years ago (Pelleter *et al.* 2014; Michon 2016) and, for the most part, ceased about a million years ago. This island has sunk and developed a massive barrier reef surrounding a rich lagoon of more than 1,000 square km. Millennia of weathering have created deep soils and there are many freshwater streams and springs (Lachassagne *et al.* 2014). Early volcanic eruptions on Nzwani are dated to about 5 million years ago, while those on Mwali date to a little more than 3 million years ago, but further sampling will doubtless yield older dates (Michon 2016). Nzwani and Mwali have limited development of coral protecting small lagoons on the south and east coasts. They are rugged with high ridges, but have significant soil development and some permanent streams and springs. On Ngazija, no volcanic rocks have been dated older than 130,000 years, and most are much younger, and the volcano of Karthala regularly erupts. The far north and far south of this large island do have limited coral development, however, and the far southeast has a small, protected lagoon. Soils are poorly developed, there are no freshwater springs and freshwater streams sink into the volcanic sediment as soon as rain stops. In sum, Maore, the oldest of the islands, would have been the most attractive to earlier settlers, and Ngazija, the newest, would have been the least.

Once the volcanoes had risen above the surface of the sea, weathering and erosion would begin to create soils where vegetation could find a purchase. On Ngazija today we can get some idea of the time involved by considering lava flows from Karthala of known age (Class *et al.* 1998: figure 3): a flow from 1977 now has a few annual plants. A flow from 1880 has areas of annual grasses and perennials, even small bushes. We can surmise that full arboreal vegetation would require several more centuries at minimum, even more considering that recent lava flows have nearby seed sources, while the fresh lava and ash of new islands must wait for seeds to blow, float or be carried by birds from hundreds of kilometres away. After millions of years, however, the older islands would have developed complex ecosystems with dense forests on the windward sides, deciduous forests on the drier leeward sides, even alpine meadows on the high peak of Karthala, and reefs and lagoons rich with fish and shellfish. There are no comprehensive assessments of the flora, but of the 83 butterfly species 20 per cent are endemic (Lewis *et al.* 1998) and of 43 resident bird species, 37 per cent are endemic (Louette and Stevens 1992). Among the mammals, 20 per cent of the ten bats, both the large fruit bats, commonly hunted until recently, and the smaller insectivorous bats, are endemic (Goodman *et al.* 2010).

The first human visitors could have been foragers collecting the resources of the natural forests and lagoons. The finer-grained of the volcanic rocks of the islands break naturally

into sharp flakes, and other flakes have been created, and even retouched, by recent masons making blocks for walls and terraces. It is not surprising that there are reports of possible tools from all the islands. However, unless these are found in sealed contexts with food remains and features such as hearths with dateable material, there will be doubt about human manufacture and age. Two promising sites have been reported in the far southeast of Ngazija (Chami 2009: 115–28). Some of the basalt flake tools from the lowest layers of the beach of Mbeni and from a cave near Male have been analysed by Kessy (in Chami 2009: 184–8, Table 14.1, [Figure 14.1](#)) and the fauna from the cave have been analysed by Mbassa (in Chami 2009: 189–92, Table 15.1). Efforts at absolute dating suggest the cave sediments may be disturbed. This important pioneering research clearly merits continuation, but it is only relevant to this chapter in that foragers' activities, especially burning, can affect the initial choices available to subsequent farmers, and we can proceed ahead with the understanding that there may have been hunter-gatherers on the Comoros before the arrival of village farmers.

The arrival of the Shore Folk on the Comoros: 750–1000 CE

Research

In his first visit to the Comoros in 1966, the French archaeologist Pierre V  rin (1975) visited the site of Old Sima on Nzwani and, from a deep midden layer near the Zira'at, the early congregational mosque, removed a few sherds and a sea shell. These yielded radiocarbon age determinations originally interpreted as dating to 500 CE. However, calibrating for the reservoir of ancient carbon dioxide in Indian Ocean waters and for atmospheric fluctuations in ^{14}C , the shell dates between 840 and 1070 CE (Wright 1984: 54–5). On Maore, the early slope middens of Dembeni were discovered by Guy Billard (1977) followed by further excavations by Wright in 1981 (Wright 1984: 16–19) and the team of Allibert in 1983 (Allibert *et al.* 1990). All report well-sealed samples of potsherds, animal bones, shells, carbonised seeds and other items, but architecture is represented only by burned daub with the impressions of lashed frameworks. Efforts at absolute dating were not very useful, but imported ceramics indicated dates in the eighth to tenth centuries CE. Also in 1981, Wright re-visited Old Sima on Nzwani just after reconstruction of the road from the modern village south to the sea and recorded and sampled the section of a large pit, which yielded material similar to that found at Dembeni (Wright 1984: 19–21). Three sites in Ngazija also yielded similar evidence (Wright 1984: 21–3). On the basis of material from small excavations on these sites, Wright defined the 'Dembeni Phase'. The material signature that characterised these sites is thought to represent social formation for a limited time, in this case one which spread throughout the Comorian Archipelago during the eighth to early tenth centuries CE. The largest of the sites on Ngazija, M'Bachil   on the west coast, was further studied by the SAREC project under direction of

Paul Sinclair (1992). In 1988, Claude Chanudet completed his magisterial study of the archaeology of Mwali including his investigations of the large eighth to tenth century site of M'ro Dewa (Chanudet 1988: 187–221) and the tenth to eighteenth century site of Mwali M'jini (Chanudet 1988: 380–503). Claude Allibert discovered and dated the site of Kongou on Maore in 1986 (Allibert 1989), its publication marking the end to this productive decade of work. Little additional research would be done on sites of this period until the programme of the African Archaeological Network begun by Felix Chami in 2006 (Chami 2009). In 2013, Stephane Pradines began a major programme at Dembeni. In the same year Sealinks team members visited several Dembeni phase sites on Ngazija and Nzwani in order to improve sampling for plant and animal remains, and also succeeded in acquiring a series of radiocarbon dates from Sima.

p.270

Society and economy

There appears to have been at least one large Dembeni Phase community of 3 to 5 ha on each island, some with fragments of the burnt mud-plastered walls indicating rectangular pole houses ([Figure 26.1](#); Wright *et al.* 1984: 46). We have never found any surface evidence of internal differences within these sites, such as variation in the qualities of local goods, in the quantities of imported goods or in the types of architectural remains, so it seems likely that differences of rank and wealth were minimal. However, excavation has been confined to only a few test trenches on any one site and, at most of the more important Dembeni Phase sites, the layers are covered by later deposits. We do not have the plan or artefact inventory of a single house anywhere. In contrast to these larger communities were smaller coastal sites (Ngazija) and hill slope sites (Mwali and Maore), which may have been small villages or camps, focused on fishing or gardening.

On one of the beach sites on Ngazija, recent sand quarrying revealed burials, which provide information about the biological and cultural relations of some of the Dembeni Phase people. The physical features of one well-preserved adult are eastern African in affinity (Georges Boulinier, 1984, personal communication) and the deliberate removal of his incisors is a custom frequently attested in that area. This custom, plus the orientation of the burials with the head south rather than east, indicates that some people of this coastal village were not Muslims. Other burials on Ngazija, however, indicate that some contemporary Comorians had already accepted Islam.

Comorians of the Dembeni Phase cultivated much rice, some millet and a small-seeded legume. Cotton is attested from Sima (Hoffman 1984; Crowther *et al.* 2016). They certainly had coconuts and bamboo in their gardens, and they may have used related crops whose remains we have not yet recovered, such as bananas and taro. It is notable that some of their crops were of probable African origin, but many were definitely from Southeast Asia. They hunted the naturalised insectivore, the tenrec, as well as marine turtles. The

remains of domesticated goats have frequently been recovered, as have the odd sheep, cow, pig and chicken bone (Allibert *et al.* 1990: 127–39). The ovi-caprids, ultimately Near Eastern, were probably more immediately of African origin and, though chickens were ultimately Southeast Asian, they could have come via eastern Africa (Prendergast *et al.* 2016). However, Dembeni villagers probably gained most of their protein from the lagoons and reefs, collecting shellfish and taking turtles and fish with nets, hooks and spears. Some of the fish taxa would have been taken outside the reefs, an indication that canoes were widespread (Scott 1984). Though the outrigger has a long history in the Comoros (Boulinier and Boulinier-Giraud 1976) and early Comorians were travelling between the islands and beyond, we cannot be certain that they used a true outrigger, or a simple canoe with a sail.

Several crafts can be inferred. Both fishing and garden cultivation require certain elements of technology. The evidence of slag from both Dembeni and Sima shows that there were local smiths able to make and repair iron tools. Although no actual fishing gear was found, a garden knife little different from those used today was found at Dembeni. Also found there was the tip of a heavy cutlass, which could have been a butchering knife, a weapon or both (Wright *et al.* 1984: 45–6, figures 16a, b). Wood carving for houses, household furniture, tool handles and canoes must also have been ubiquitous, but no direct evidence has been recovered. Local ceramic production is certain only at Dembeni and Sima, but was probably widespread. Dembeni had evidence of shell bead production. We suspect most were household crafts, rather than workshop crafts.

p.271

Settlement patterns and major settlements

Maore

The coasts of this island – except for the southeastern corner – including high ridges, mangrove swamps and some of the off-shore islets, were examined by a team on foot between 1975 and 1981 (Kus and Wright 1976). In general, early ceramics were found in gardens and eroded areas. Although many sites were recorded, we could have missed small sites because of the dense vegetation in many areas. Early in the survey programme, we suggested another cultural unit termed the ‘Majikavu Phase’ found only on the northeast coast of Maore (Kus and Wright 1976; Wright 1986: 56–61) in one small village and various small hamlet sites, which has heavier jars with deep shell imprints and no red graphited ware. Allibert (1992) has suggested that this is simply a local variant of the Dembeni Phase, and I believe that this is correct. At present, Dembeni Phase ceramics are known from one larger site, one smaller coastal site and a few isolated ceramic occurrences, perhaps marking field camps.

Dembeni on the east coast of Maore sits on a ridge 60 m above sea level overlooking the estuary of the M'ro Adembeni, the largest fresh-water stream on Maore, to its south (Wright 1984: 16–17). When we examined the site in 1984 it was wooded, but sherds were visible over an area of about 5 ha, though some of this was steep slopes with middens, but unsuitable for habitation. The area of actual Dembeni Phase habitation may have covered only 3–4 ha. During the 1980s three soundings were placed in the slope midden, all yielding Dembeni Phase material, and two were on the ridge top, both of which revealed Dembeni Phase sherds only in mixed contexts. Recent extensive work by Pradines (2013; Pradines and Herviaux 2015) has revealed layers on the summit of the ridge apparently with Dembeni Phase material sealed under later fill. However, there is no report of architectural remains. In volume-controlled, water-screened samples, the density by weight of red graphited ceramics is relatively high, 26 per cent that of plain ware, suggesting that elaborate food serving was common. The density by weight of imported large jar sherds is 19 per cent that of plain ceramics, also relatively high, suggesting enhanced trade connections.

Nzwani

About 20 per cent of the surface of this roughly triangular island has been examined. The central portions of south, east and northwest coasts, and transects inland from each of these coastal strips, were mostly cultivated and visible. Surprisingly, only one large site – the long recognised town of Old Sima – has been located. Another site is difficult to assess because it has had dense occupation for most of the last millennium, and Dembeni Phase traces were recognised only in one excavation. This is a surprisingly low density of both large and small settlement given the natural bounty of the island and the intensity of survey coverage.

Sima on the south coast of Nzwani is on a ridge sloping south from about 100 to 50 metres above the sea, with a view of the reef that protects a small harbour (Wright 1984: 19–20). There are springs and a small permanent stream immediately to the east. Early ceramics are scattered over more than six hectares, of which at least five hectares are suitable for housing. Soundings near the Zira'at mosque near the lower, southern end of the site (discussed below) yielded scattered Dembeni sherds on fragmentary sand floors, as well as a few postholes, probably the remnants of houses destroyed by later pits. The large pit visible in the road cut at the northern or upper end of the site is not a ditch as was suggested in 1984, but rather a clay pit dug to provide red sediment for the daub used for houses and brown sediment for ceramics, subsequently filled with layers of burned daub, ashes, shell, bone and sherds. Re-cleaning of this pit in 2013 allowed the dating of a series of seeds, mostly rice, between 760 and 950 CE (Crowther *et al.* 2016). Dense occupation after AD 1000 makes it difficult to define the architecture of this early period. The density by weight of red graphited ceramics is a relatively high 25–34 per cent that of plain ware, suggesting that here too elaborate food serving was common. The density by weight of

imported large jar sherd ranges from 0 to 12 per cent that of plain ceramics, suggesting variable trade connections.

p.272

At Domoni on the east coast of Nzwani, 2.5 km south of the large and permanent M'ro Jomani, Dembeni Phase occupation is indicated by sherds from the lower layers of the Shirazi Mosque on a small beach close to the sea (Wright 1984: 15–18). The size of the site cannot be estimated from this single localised occurrence.

Mwali

This smallest of the Comoros was surveyed over several years by Chanudet (1988: 3–7) during his residence there as a medical doctor. He had the advantage of close collaboration with local informants and with the engineers re-building the island's road system, which revealed many sites. His coverage of the northwestern and central areas, both coasts and interior, was thorough. He has demonstrated that there were two large Dembeni Phase settlements on the northeast coast, perhaps successively important. In addition, there are two smaller village sites near the coast and three small sherd scatters, perhaps field camps, in the interior (Chanudet 1988: 187–204, figure 39). This suggests that the deforestation of the interior had already begun, even in this early period.

M'ro Dewa on the northern coast of Mwali is on a terrace about 12 metres above sea level, perhaps an ancient beach, cut by the large permanent M'ro Dewa stream. It is almost completely covered by the modern town of Foubouni. It has a view to the north over a small lagoon and reef. There is a diffuse scatter of Dembeni Phase sherds extending about 1,100 metres from east to west and about 300 metres covering about 30 hectares, but Chanudet (1988 Plate 15) indicates a central concentration of sherds covering about 5.5 hectares, perhaps the area of housing, in contrast to the area of gardens fertilised with village refuse. Testing, however, revealed no features undisturbed by gardening and modern housing. We cannot make quantitative estimates of the densities of ceramic wares, but the full range of red graphited and plain impressed or incised vessels are illustrated (Chanudet 1988: Plates to 16 to 23).

Mwali M'jini is on the central north coast of Mwali, 4 km east-southeast of M'ro Dewa. It is on a plateau 40 to 80 m above the sea and covering a total of 11 ha, isolated by the valley of the presently seasonal M'ro Nyambeni to the south (Chanudet 1988: 381–458, figure 120). Today, the site is unoccupied and heavily wooded, but marked by the standing and collapsed stone walls of defences and buildings of the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries. Dembeni sherds were found to the east outside the later town wall, and westward along the edge of the plateau facing the sea. We suggest an area of about 5 hectares. A deeply buried layer with many shells in the north-westernmost area of the site yielded a radiocarbon date that calibrates between 770 and 1020 CE. Examples of red

graphited and plain impressed or incised vessels are illustrated (Chanudet 1988: 471–6, Plates 184–187). Chanudet suggests that this was a later Dembeni occupation of the late ninth and tenth centuries.

p.273

Ngazija

Less than 10 per cent of the large island of Ngazija was surveyed during the 1980s. Survey is difficult, not only because of dense primary and secondary vegetation, but because of recent volcanic activity. The many recent lava flows and ash falls may well cover the important early sites. When they are found, they will be of the greatest interest. Nevertheless, one possible large site and a number of village sites of a hectare or less have been mapped and sampled. Of particular note is Nyamawi on the far north of the island, studied by the Sealinks team in 2013 (Boivin *et al.* 2013). Here the sea has cut into middens and floors covered by re-deposited lapilli. A burial on the right side with head east and facing north, certainly in accord with Islamic rites, was photographed in 1999 (Ian Walker, personal communication 1999). Volume-controlled flotation samples produced charcoal but no seeds, and many shells and fish bone, but only a few bird or bat bones. The charcoal from different layers yielded two indistinguishable dates calibrated between 880 and 1020 CE. There was no red graphited ware and no imported ceramics. In contrast to the larger sites, this was clearly a humble fishing village with few wider contacts.

M'Bachilé on a small bay on the west coast of Ngazija was a large settlement, with a visible sherd scatter covering at least 4 hectares (Wright 1984: 21–2; figures 6, 7), but some may be from the eleventh to twelfth centuries. Sinclair's innovative geoarchaeological coring programme under the SAREC program revealed that the ninth to tenth century deposits were intact over 1.5 ha, but some may have been lost to the sea (Sinclair 1992: 271–3, figures 1, 2). In the single available volume-controlled sample from the wave-cut west edge of the site, the density by weight of red graphited ceramics is relatively high, at 15 per cent of that of plain ware, suggesting that elaborate food serving was common. The density by weight of imported small glazed bowl sherd ranges from 0 to 6 per cent of that of plain ceramics.

Summary

The known larger sites thus cover 3 to 5 hectares, and most are on high defensible ridges close to possible harbours. The clear exception is the large site of M'ro Dewa, which is on a low ridge close to the sea. So far, no traces of walls or other defensive works have been dated to this period. All are close to larger streams, all of which were probably permanent before extensive deforestation. Where quantitative evidence is available, the red slipped graphited serving wares appear to be more common at these larger sites, and imported jars

and bowls from the Near East or East Asia occur consistently. In contrast are the smaller settlements, which are not clustered near the larger settlements but are on more distant coasts, and which seem to have less red graphited ware and fewer imports.

Inter-regional contacts

The minimal broader relations of the Dembeni Phase communities are necessitated by the simple requisites of demography. Estimating from the areas and populations of traditional villages on Maore (Breslar 1979), few if any Dembeni communities would have exceeded 500 people. Therefore, from time to time, young people would have had to seek spouses elsewhere. The population of the archipelago as a whole probably exceeded one thousand inhabitants, so it could have been demographically self-contained. However, since the ceramics of the Dembeni Phase not only resemble but are, in many cases, identical with contemporary ceramics on the eastern African coast, from Chibuene in southern Mozambique to Shanga in northern Kenya (Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2011), potters must have moved between the Comoros and the coasts of eastern Africa. The presence of chlorite schist vessel fragments on some sites demonstrates contact with Madagascar as well. Beyond this, broad connections through the Indian Ocean trade network are indicated by imported ceramics. Common imports from the Near East include heavy jars with turquoise-blue glazes, long termed ‘Sasano-Islamic Ware’, and bowls with opaque white glazes sometimes with splashes of blue, green or golden lustre, all probably made in or near Basra (Mason and Keall 1991; Mason 1997; Priestman, this volume). Rarer East Asian imports include Tang Dynasty stoneware jars with greenish brown glaze and stoneware and porcelain plain bowls with light green or clear glazes. The bones of house mice and rats in several Dembeni Phase sites indicate visits by larger water craft, and it is possible that merchants came bringing ceramics and seeking such known Dembeni Phase products as tortoise shell, marine shell, iron and some crystal (Allibert *et al.* 1989: 125–6). Remember, however, that some seemingly rare imports such as metals and glass were commonly re-cycled rather than discarded, and others such as silk would leave no trace detectable with current methods. Conversely, some exports – such as cotton, gums and woods – have not often been studied. Whatever early traders sought, the balance of trade was apparently favourable since, during the Dembeni Phase, the larger communities discarded an average of 4 per cent imported sherds (as opposed to local sherds) from general excavation, a proportion exceeding all sites on the coasts of Madagascar and Africa except the ports of trade at Unguja Ukuu on Zanzibar and Manda on the Lamu Archipelago (Wright 1993: 664).

The web of faith and politics

The finding of several individuals buried according to Islamic practice shows that, at least on Ngazija, some Comorians had accepted Islam in the eighth to tenth centuries (*contra* Wright 1984: 57, 1993: 663). However, research so far has not documented any formal building such as a mosque or elite residence. It is possible that further work at major sites such as Dembeni, Sima or Mwali M'jini will reveal such features but, for the moment, the Dembeni Phase appears to represent prosperous village society, with relatively few people scattered across the archipelago, in close communication with each other and with people on the eastern African coast. Some individuals probably travelled widely and were actively involved in trade and some people – perhaps the same, perhaps not – accepted Islam and were buried according to Islamic practice. There is no indication of social inequality or political centralisation. It seems likely that these were Sabaki-speakers with an early form of the Comorian language, but we cannot be certain. We can, however, be sure that they are participants in a culture with many of the basic features of Swahili social formations of later times.

References

- Allibert, C. 1989. 'Early settlement on the Comoro Archipelago'. *National Geographic Research* 5 (4): 392–3.
- Allibert, C. 1992. 'Le point sur l'archéologie de Mayotte (Archipel des Comores) pour la période 8–13eme siècle: résultat des travaux menés entre 1979 et 1991'. *Fondation pour l'étude de archéology de Mayotte, Dossier No. 1*. Paris: INALCO.
- Allibert, C., Argant, A. and Argant, J. 1989. 'Le site de Dembeni Mayotte, Archipel des Comores'. *Etudes Océan Indien* 11: 63–172.
- Ben Ali, D. 1984. 'Organisation sociale et politique des Comores avant le XVème siècle'. *Ya Mkobe* 1: 25–31.
- Billard, G. 1977. 'Notes sur la découvertes de traces de civilisations anciens à Mayotte'. *Asie du Sud-Est et le Monde Insul-indien* 8: 3–4.
- Boivin, N., Crowther, A., Helm, R. and Fuller, D. Q. 2013. 'East Africa and Madagascar in the Indian Ocean world'. *Journal of World Prehistory* 26: 213–81.
- Boulinier, G. and Boulinier-Giraud, G. 1976. 'Chronologie de la pirogue à balancier: le témoignage de l'océan Indien occidental'. *Journal de la Société des Océanistes* 32 (50): 89–98.
- Breslar, J. H. 1979. *L'Habitat Mahorais: Une Perspective Ethnologique*. Paris: Editions A.G.G.

- Chami, F. A. (Ed.) 2009. *Zanzibar and the Swahili Coast from ca. 30,000 Years Ago*. Studies in the African past 7. Dar es Salaam: University of Dar es Salaam Press.
- Chanudet, C. 1988. 'Contribution à l'étude de peuplement de l'île de Mohéli'. PhD diss., Institute Nationale des Langue et Civilisations Orientale (I.Na.L.C.O.) de L'Université de Paris.
- Chouzour, S. 1982. 'Histoire et sociologie de Ngazidja: le manuscrit de Saïd Hussein, presentation, traduction et notes'. *Etudes Océan Indien* 1: 17–53.
- Class, C., Goldstein, S. L., Altherr, R. and Bachèlery, P. 1998. 'The process of plume–lithosphere interactions in the ocean basins: the case of Grande Comore'. *Journal of Petrology* 39 (5): 881–903.
- Crowther, A., Lucas, L., Helm, R., Horton, M., Shipton, C., Wright, H. T., *et al.* 2016. 'Ancient crops provide first archaeological signature of the westward Austronesian expansion'. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 113 (24): 6635–40.
- Dewar, R., Radimilahy, C., Wright, H., Jacobs, Z., Kelly, G. O. and Berna, F. 2013. 'Stone tools and foraging in northern Madagascar challenge Holocene extinction models'. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 110 (31): 12583–8.
- Emerick, C. M. and Duncan, R. A. 1982. 'Age progressive volcanism in the Comores Archipelago, western Indian Ocean and implications for Somali plate tectonics'. *Earth and Planetary Science Letters* 60 (3): 415–28.
- Fleisher, J. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2011. 'Ceramics and the early Swahili: deconstructing the Early Tana Tradition'. *African Archaeological Review* 28: 245–78.
- Goodman, S. M., Weyeneth, N., Ibrahim, Y., Saïd, I. and Ruedi, M. 2010. 'A review of the bat fauna of the Comoro Archipelago'. *Acta Chiropterologica* 12 (1): 117–41.
- Gourjon, G., Boëtsch, G. and Degioanni, A. 2011. 'Gender and population history: sex bias revealed by studying genetic admixture of Ngazidja population (Comoro Archipelago)'. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 144 (4): 653–60.
- Gueunier, N. 1976. 'Notes sur le dialecte malgache de l'île de Mayotte (Comores)'. *Asie Sud-est et Monde Insul-indien* 7 (2–3): 81–118.
- Gueunier, N. 2004. 'Le dialecte Malgache de Mayotte (Comores): une discussion dialectologique et sociolinguistique'. *Faits de Langues* 23–24: 397–467.
- Hébert, J.-C. 2000. 'Le bassin sacré du vieux Sima à Anjouan'. *Études Océan Indien* 29: 121–63.
- Hoffman, E. S. 1984. 'Subsistence evidence: botanical remains', 48–9. In Wright, H. T., Sinopoli, C., Wojnarowski, L., Hoffman, E. S., Scott, S. L., Redding, R. W. and Goodman, S. M. 1984. 'Early seafarers of the Comoro Islands: the Dembeni Phase of the IXth–Xth centuries AD'. *Azania* 19: 13–59.
- Kus, S. M. and Wright, H. T. 1976. 'Note préliminaires sur une reconnaissance archéologique de l'île de Mayotte (Archipel des Comores)'. *Asie Sud-est le Monde Indo-insulien* 7 (2–3): 123–5.

- Lachassagne, P., Aunay, B., Frissant, N., Guilbert, M. and Malard, A. 2014. 'High-resolution conceptual hydrogeological model of complex basaltic volcanic islands: Mayotte, Comoros, a case study'. *Terra Nova* 26 (4): 307–21.
- Lewis, O. T., Wilson, R. J. and Harper, M. C. 1998. 'Endemic butterflies on Grande Comore: habitat preferences and conservation priorities'. *Biological Conservation* 85 (1): 113–21.
- Louette, M. and Stevens, J. 1992. 'Conserving the endemic birds on the Comoro Islands, I: general considerations on survival prospects'. *Bird Conservation International* 2 (1): 61–80.
- Mason, R. B. 1997. 'Early mediaeval Iraqi lustre-painted and associated wares: typology in a multidisciplinary study'. *Iraq* 59: 15–61.
- Mason, R. B. and Keall, E. J. 1991. 'The 'Abbāsid glazed wares of Sīrāf and the Baṣra connection: petrographic analysis'. *Iran* 29: 51–66.
- Michon, L. 2016 'The volcanism of the Comoros Archipelago integrated at a regional scale'. In *Active Volcanos of the Southwest Indian Ocean*, edited by P. Bachelery, J.-F. Lenat, A. Di Muro and L. Michon, 333–44. Berlin: Springer.

p.276

- M'Saidie, S., Ducourneau, A., Boetsch, G., Longepied, G., Papa, K., Allibert, C., *et al.* 2011. 'Genetic diversity on the Comoros Islands shows early seafaring as major determinant of human biocultural evolution in the western Indian Ocean'. *European Journal of Human Genetics* 19 (1): 89–94.
- Nougier, J., Cantagrel, J. M. and Karche, J. P. 1986. 'The Comores Archipelago in the western Indian Ocean: volcanology, geochronology and geodynamic setting'. *Pelletier* 5 (2): 135–44.
- Nurse, D. and Spear, T. 1985. *The Swahili: Reconstructing the History and Language of an African Society*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Pelletier A.-A., Caroff, M., Cordier, C., Bachèlery, P., Nehlig, P., Debeuf, D. and Arnaud, P. 2014. 'Melilite-bearing lavas in Mayotte (France): an insight into the mantle source below the Comores'. *Lithos* 208–9: 281–97.
- Pradines, S. 2013. 'The rock crystal of Dembeni, Mayotte Mission Report 2013'. *Nyame Akuma* 80: 59–72.
- Pradines, S. and Herviaux, G. 2015. 'Dembéni, un site urbain bipolaire? Mayotte, rapport intermédiaire 2014'. *Nyame Akuma* 83: 128–41.
- Prendergast, M. E., Rouby, H., Punnwong, P., Marchant, R., Crowther, A., Kourampas, N., *et al.* 2016. 'Continental island formation and the archaeology of defaunation on Zanzibar, eastern Africa'. *PLoS ONE* 11 (2): e0149565.
- Rantoandro, G. 1983. 'Une communauté mercantile du nord ouest: les Antalaotra'. *Omalysy anio* 20: 195–210.

- Scott, S. L. 1984. 'Subsistence evidence: the fish remains'. In 'Early seafarers of the Comoro Islands: the Dembeni Phase of the IXth–Xth centuries AD', edited by H. T. Wright. *Azania* 19: 13–59.
- Sinclair, P. J. J. 1992. 'Information technology applications in the urban origins in Eastern Africa Project: the wider context'. In *Urban Origins in Eastern Africa, Proceedings of the 1991 Workshop in Zanzibar*, edited by P. J. J. Sinclair and A. Juma, 268–75. Stockholm: Swedish Central Board of National Antiquities.
- Sinopoli, C. 1984. 'Domestic technology of the Dembeni Phase: Comorian ceramics'. In 'Early seafarers of the Comoro Islands: the Dembeni Phase of the IXth–Xth centuries AD'. *Azania* 19: 13–59.
- Vérin, P. 1975. 'Les échelles anciens due commerce sur les cotes nords de Madagascar'. PhD diss., L'Université de Paris I: Sorbonne.
- Wright, H. 1986. 'Early communities on the Island of Mayotte and the Coasts of Madagascar'. In *Madagascar: Society and History*, edited by C. Kottak, J.-A. Rakotoarisoa, A. Southall and P. Vérin, 53–88. Durham: Academic Press of North Carolina.
- Wright, H. T. 1993. 'Trade and politics on the eastern littoral of Africa: AD 800–1300'. In *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns*, edited by T. Shaw, P. Sinclair, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, 658–72. London: Routledge.
- Wright, H. T., Sinopoli, C., Wojnaroski, L., Hoffman, E. S., Scott, S. L., Redding, R. W. and Goodman, S. M. 1984. 'Early seafarers of the Comoro Islands: the Dembeni Phase of the IXth–Xth centuries AD'. *Azania* 19: 13–59.

27

THE COMOROS 1000–1350 CE

Henry T. Wright

The rise of congregations, merchants and towns: 1000–1350 CE

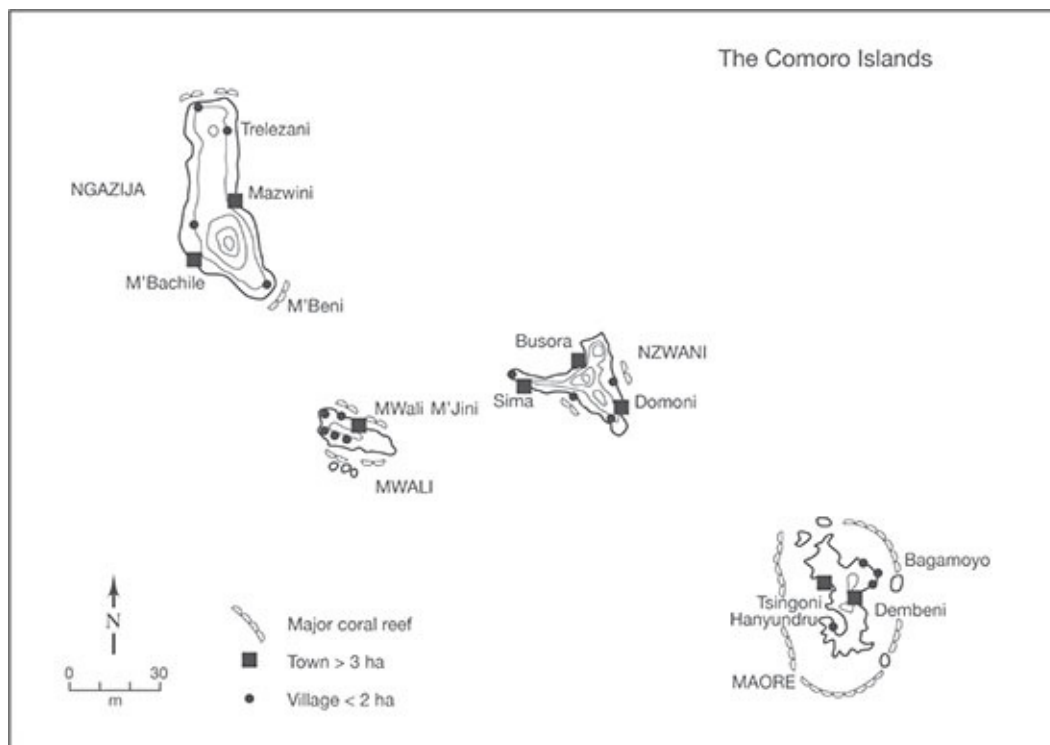
Research

Vérin recognised that the mosques with elaborate carved coral decoration at Tsingoni on Maore (detailed below) and Sima and Domoni on Nzwani implied occupations of the fourteenth century or before at these sites. We had some idea of what the ceramics would be from his excavations at the site of Mahilaka on the northwest coast of Madagascar (Vérin 1975: 618–39). Based on the similarities between the ceramics of several sites known from surface survey, Kus and Wright defined a ‘Hanyundru (then spelled ‘Agnundro’, and later ‘Hagnoundrou’) Phase’ (Kus and Wright 1976). In 1980, Wright excavated several soundings in a wave-cut cliff at the modern village of Hanyundru on the Bay of Boeny in southwestern Maore (Wright 1983). This was a coastal village of 2–3 hectares. These efforts yielded shells and animal bones, a range of local ceramics and a sherd of late Persian Gulf sgraffiato with matte green glaze suggesting a thirteenth-century date. Wright also observed, but could not excavate, the footings of a masonry building oriented east–west, probably a mosque, and two burials on their right side with face oriented north, the prescribed Islamic rite. No absolute dates were possible. Beginning in 1981, Claude Allibert began his long-term study of the sites of Bagamoyo and Mirandolé on the small volcanic island of Pamanzi off the northeast coast of Maore, a site partly damaged by wave erosion (Allibert *et al.* 1983; Allibert 1992). Here his team found the remains of domestic features, iron-working installations, and a range of burials, with a radiocarbon date calibrated to the twelfth century. The excavated ceramics are different from those of Hanyundru, suggesting that it might be possible to define several cultural phases within the period 1000 to 1400 CE.

In 1984, Wright with architect James Knudstad returned to Nzwani to place soundings to study and date the visible early mosques on the major sites there (Wright 1992). This

work produced small but well-dated samples of ceramics, bones and carbonised seeds, and it is indeed possible to date the earliest mosques approximately at both locations and to divide the ceramics into an eleventh- to twelfth-century group and a thirteenth-century group. During the 1980s, Chanudet was finding similar evidence in his intensive survey of Mwali. Certainly Mwali M'jini has the full range of eleventh- to fourteenth-century ceramics known from Maore and Nzwani. A number of smaller village and hamlet sites have similar evidence. In contrast, research on Ngazija has revealed only scattered evidence of this period.

p.278



[Figure 27.1](#) Map of the Comoros showing major sites of eleventh to fourteenth centuries

The research of the Société pour l'Archéologie et Histoire de Mayotte (SHAM) has been making important contributions to archaeology since the 1990s (Liszkowski 1999, 2002), but in 2006 a transformation in Comorian archaeology was initiated by Martial Pauly (2013) with the beginning of his long-term programme at Acua on the northwest coast of Maore ([Figure 27.1](#)). He has combined comprehensive sampling of many types of features, meticulous stratigraphic excavation, the functional study of human remains, a large series of 14C dates, high-quality images, and close integration with historical sources. This has resulted in a very useful re-definition of the thirteenth- to fifteenth-century cultural changes.

Society and economy

We have somewhat more evidence of houses and basic social units on the Comoros of this important period of cultural development throughout the western Indian Ocean, than we had for the previous period. In the recent excavations at Acua, a site of 3.6 ha, a wall around the settlement has been dated to the late twelfth century (Pauly 2013: 76–81, figures 4–5). Within, Pauly (2011: figures 1, 3, 2013: figure 8) reports houses of differing elaboration developing at least by the fourteenth century. Some of the most promising evidence available from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries is from recent meticulous research on the cemetery of Antsiraka Boira on a ridge above the village of Acua, where Pauly's team has excavated at least 35 interments, most laid out on their right side and facing roughly northeast. A majority of these were marked by a rectangular or oval arrangement of stones at the surface. The larger and more elaborate stone structures are in the middle of burial clusters with smaller ones and those without markers around them, indicating some degree of social hierarchy, though perhaps simply the differences one expects inside extended families.

Comorians of this era cultivated much rice, some millet and a small-seeded legume as well as coconuts, hunted the tenrec, and kept domestic goats and some sheep, chickens and also a few cows (Wright 1983). They exploited the same kind of lagoon and reef fish as their predecessors (Wright, 'Early History', this volume). Given the increased number and size of settlements, agricultural intensification would be expected, and the existence of dry-stone terracing at some sites may be an indication of this. In general, the subsistence base is similar to that of the Dembeni Phase communities.

p.279

Crafts are also similar to those attested on earlier sites. The evidence of slag from several sites shows that there were local smiths able to make and repair iron tools. An elaborate iron-working facility at Bagamoyo-Mirandolé suggests a working group of smiths (Allibert *et al.* 1983). A garden knife little different from those used today was found at Hanyundru (Wright 1983). As before, wood-working must have been ubiquitous, but no direct evidence has been recovered. The preparation of cement and plaster by burning coral was widespread, with both larger centres and some smaller villages having masonry mosques. Both iron-working and cement production require much charcoal, the production of which would have an impact on forests. Local ceramic production was probably widespread. We have no direct evidence of workshop production for any craft.

Settlement patterns and major settlements of the eleventh to fourteenth centuries CE

Maore

Archaeology on Maore seems to have revealed a pattern of clustered villages; each cluster has a distinctive material signature. The large centre of Dembeni and smaller villages on the east coast such as Bagamoyo–Mirandolé and the later occupation at Majikavu have comparable ceramics, probably dating to the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Survey of the southeast quadrant of Maore will probably reveal that there is a cluster of villages on the central east coast subsidiary to Dembeni. In contrast, the larger site of Tsingoni and the village of Hanyundru have ceramic assemblages similar to one another, dating to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Future study will probably reveal a cluster of villages on the central west coast subsidiary to Tsingoni, which remained the major centre on Maore until at least the seventeenth century.

Dembeni on the east coast of Maore – important in the earliest settlement of the island – remained a major settlement at least in the eleventh or twelfth centuries, but did not change greatly in size. Pradines’ (2015) recent testing of the extent of occupational deposits shows that of the 10 hectares of level, habitable land, two areas – one in the centre of about 3 ha and one to the east of about 2 ha, each with an associated large stratified refuse heap – have evidence of eleventh- to thirteenth-century habitation. Indications of walls and floors were found in these areas, and future excavation should document structures. However, Pradines rightly emphasises the difficulties of accounting for erosion and in assessing the west of the site, which is densely covered in bamboo. Pradines’ (Pradines and Herviaux 2015: 136–8) reports that 20 per cent of the sherds are imported. While sherd counts cannot be directly compared to the weighed, volume-controlled, wet-sieved samples available for the preceding phase, it indicates easy access to the Indian Ocean trade network.

Tsingoni on the west coast of Maore lies on a ridge 80 m above a protected bay to the south, with fresh-water streams to both the north and south. It has a fourteenth century (or earlier) mosque, early tombs and traces of walls and terraces in the eroded areas of the modern village. The scatter of sherds throughout its area of 8.5 ha is primarily fifteenth century or later, however Allibert (1992) has recorded a sherd with characteristic Hanyundru rectangular punctates. It seems likely that the shift of the major centre of Maore from Dembeni to Tsingoni, traditional seat of the first royal dynasty of Maore, took place in the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries CE.

p.280

Nzwani

The sample survey of this island has revealed a wealth of settlement evidence for this span of time. The two larger centres were occupied throughout the period, Sima to the west and Domoni to the east, both becoming prosperous towns with masonry mosques elaborated in styles similar to those used throughout the Swahili world (Horton, ‘Islamic Architecture’, this volume). During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, one large village

grew up north of Domoni, and two smaller villages developed equidistant from the two centres. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there was one large and four small villages on the east coast near Domoni, two small villages in the far west near Sima, and one isolated new town of 5.5 ha, Busora, on the northwest coast (Wright 1992: 122–6, figures 14, 15).

Sima on the south coast of Nzwani expanded to the north and west to cover about 8 ha. It has a large refuse heap to the north, similar to those at Dembeni. There was a substantial cemetery on the ridge to the west (Ali Muhammed Gou, personal communication 2013). The mosque was built on an area of light post constructions, probably domestic. The earliest masonry Zira'at mosque of the eleventh to twelfth centuries is represented by a fragment of the west wall, built of basalt blocks set in coral cement. The second Zira'at mosque of the thirteenth century CE is estimated to have had external measurements of 13.8 by 10.9 metres with axis oriented 27° west of north. The third and final Zira'at mosque measured 11.2 by 7.3 metres with the same axis (Knudstad 1992: 117–19, figures 6 and 12) and two rows of masonry columns. This latest mosque fell into disrepair in the early fifteenth century, about the time when traditions say that Sima was destroyed by the forces of Domoni, never to regain its ancient status.

Domoni on the east coast of Nzwani has dense still-occupied housing and its size cannot be estimated. Nevertheless, the elaboration of the early mosque and the evidence of a large cemetery on a peninsula to the east suggest that it was at least as large as Sima. The earliest structure in the area of the Shirazi mosque is indicated by an isolated large posthole, 45 cm in diameter. A post this large could be a support for a substantial building, perhaps an early wood-framed mosque. The earliest masonry Shirazi mosque of the eleventh to twelfth centuries is represented only by the northwest corner, the remainder having been cut away by the sea. Its axis was oriented 6° east of north. The second Shirazi mosque built in the thirteenth century CE was of unknown length, but had an external width measuring 9.8 m with axis oriented 16° west of north. The third Shirazi mosque measured 11.8 by 7.4 metres with the same axis and had two rows of wooden columns. It had a deep *mihrab* decorated with carved *Porites* coral plaques and cable ornament (Knudstad 1992: 119–22, figure 11). The fourth and latest Shirazi mosque had the same exterior measurements as the third with the same axis, but had one axial row of masonry columns. The same *mihrab* was used. This mosque – with some additions – remains in use to the present day.

In sum, the best-known aspects of these two towns, these early mosques, developed in the same way with reconstructions at about the same time, differing primarily in the configuration of their interior columns. The similarities of plan and of the details of the *mihrahs* suggest that builders from one workshop were employed to work on both mosques, as well as the Tsingoni mosque on Maore and others on the east coast of Africa such as the Kizimkazi mosque on Zanzibar.

Mwali

Thorough survey of the western and central area of Mwali by Chanudet (1988: 211–31, figure 39) recorded six village sites with pottery similar to that of Hanyundru and with imported sgraffiato. Of these, four are on the coast and two are in the interior. One has evidence of a masonry structure: perhaps a mosque.

Mwali M'jini on north coast of Mwali is, however, the only large site to flourish in the period, M'ro Dewa having only some pottery similar to Bagamoyo on Maore, suggesting that it diminished early in this period. It seems unlikely that the full 11 hectares of Mwali M'jini was occupied. Neither the visible buildings nor the mosque appear to date before the fifteenth century CE. Local ceramics (Chanudet 1988: pl. 177–79), with impressed and incised motifs similar to both Bagamoyo and Hanyundru, are notable. Imported fragments of sgraffiato bowls and chlorite-schist basins (pl. 180–81) appear to have been common, though we can make no quantitative assessment. This important and very complicated site clearly merits a major excavation project.

Ngazija

It is difficult to survey on Ngazija due to the nature of the terrain (see Wright, 'Early History', this volume), but the evidence from the older terrains of the far south and far north, as well as the east and west coasts, is provocative. The first indication of occupation during the eleventh to fifteenth centuries was found at the agricultural station of M'de near Moroni, a small site of only 1.5 ha on the rim of a volcanic ash cone, and at the southern site of M'Beni-Malé, above the layer with Dembeni Phase sherds. The local ceramics are thick with grit or sand inclusions. Decorations on the rims and shoulders of carinated jars include shell impressions, zigzag incising, and rectangular and u-shaped punctates, similar to Hanyundru decoration. Imports comprise Persian Gulf sgraffiato and chlorite schist basic fragments. There is an earlier – eleventh- to twelfth-century – large site in the same place as the one possible Dembeni large site on the west coast, with a nearby interior small village site of M'de and a more distant coastal village of M'beni to the south. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries settlement seems to have shifted to the east coast, and there are larger sites on the south coast and northern interior, both with traces of masonry buildings and tombs. Because survey on this coast was restricted to sites with reported architecture, we have not recorded any dependent smaller villages, but they may well exist.

M'Bachilé on the well-watered southwest coast of Ngazija continues to be occupied. To the west, by the bay, there is a small mosque with a sherd of Late Islamic monochrome from the fifteenth century, but most of the local post-Dembeni ceramics scattered over the four or more occupied hectares are similar to those of nearby M'de. Sgraffiato is reported

to be fairly common (Paul Sinclair, personal communication, 1986).

Mazwini, on the east coast of Ngazija northeast of the active caldera of Karthala, was visited because of reports of early architecture. Ancient walls of vertical and horizontal basalt slabs were covered with coral lime plaster. Three complexes are scattered from north to south over 300 m and the entire settlement covered at least 5 ha. The settlement is covered with volcanic ash, but ceramics can be recovered from occupational layers from 20–95 cm below surface or from the sea-cut cliff. None of the standing building remains represent a mosque; some may be palatial residences, one may be a madrasa or school. Local ceramics are thick with beach sand inclusions with rare zigzag or punctate decoration, a late version of M'de ware. This is one of the few sites in the Comoros to produce Yemeni Black-on-Yellow ware, imported into the eastern African coast between 1250 and 1350 CE (Horton 1996: 291–3, figure 216). Traditional histories say that this town was abandoned after the assassination of its ruler, and that the people moved to the west coast to found Moroni (Damir ben Ali, personal communication 1984).

p.282

Trelezani in the northern interior of Ngazija is hidden in the saddle between the dormant caldera of La Grille and a smaller cinder cone. It covers a rectangular area of about 4 hectares. A small valley 150 m to the north has a now-dry spring, a rarity on Ngazija. There are central and southern masonry tomb groups, the central group having what may be a small mosque, and northeast of this is a substantial east–west wall. In this central area of the site were fragments of chlorite-schist basins and a Song Dynasty white porcelain cup. The local pottery is similar to that of Mazwini in form and fabric, but lacks decoration.

Inter-regional contacts

By the end of this period, with the expansion of towns and the proliferation of villages, the population of each of the four main islands had doubtless exceeded the 1,000 people needed for demographic stability, and there was no absolute necessity for people to move from island to island as there may have been in Dembeni times. Nevertheless, the near identity between the local ceramics from Mwali, Nzwani and Maore suggests frequent contact. Casual inspection of ceramics illustrated in site reports from such sites at Kilwa (Chittick 1974), Manda (Chittick 1984) and Shanga (Horton 1996) on the eastern African coast, and Mahilaka on the northwest coast of Madagascar (Radimilahy 1998), also shows close similarities, indicating that potters moved great distances. The presence of chlorite schist-footed basins and tops finished on a lathe occur on most sites and ceramic imitations are widespread, showing close contacts with Madagascar as well. Beyond this, broad connections through the Indian Ocean trade network are indicated by imported ceramics.

Common imports from the Near East include bowls with under-glaze sgraffiato decoration, sometimes with splashes of blue, green or brown (Wright 1992: figure 9), most probably made in the Gulf region (Mason 1997), as well as various plain large jars, some of which may be South Asian (Mark Horton, personal communication 2014). Rarer East Asian imports include Song and Yuan Dynasty stoneware jars and large bowls with greenish glazes, and mould-made small stoneware and porcelain bowls with light blue or clear glazes. In addition many glass beads and vessels and specialised metal items were imported. Exports would have included iron, tree woods and gums, marine shell and turtle shells (which could be locally produced or trans-shipped from Madagascar), to which may be added chlorite schist, gold, crystal quartz and elephant bird eggshell, all trans-shipped from Madagascar. As noted for earlier times, there would have been exports and imports that have not yet been detected, including spices, rice, fabrics and slaves. The trans-shipment of crystal, important not only as a semi-precious stone but as material for the manufacture of clear glass, was massive in this period, as indicated by the finding of many large pieces at Dembeni (Pradines 2013). If trade during the eleventh to fourteenth centuries in the Indian Ocean was more diverse, the balance of trade was perhaps slightly less favourable than before, since during this time period the larger communities discarded an average of four imported sherds per 100 local sherds found in general excavation, a proportion similar to sites on the coasts of Madagascar and Africa except gateway communities such as Shanga on the Lamu Archipelago (Horton 1996; Wright 1993: 670, [figure 40.3](#)) and perhaps Dembeni on Maore (Pradines 2015: 136–8).

p.283

The web of faith and politics

The eleventh to fourteenth centuries were times of relatively rapid and profound social and cultural change on the Comoros. Economies, both local subsistence economies and regional and trans-regional exchange economies, changed in degree but not evidently in kind. A few plants and animals are added or become more important and a few more goods are known to be moving. The focus of trade shifts from Basra and the Persian Gulf to Cairo and the Red Sea. However, human communities change radically. Major settlements expand from 5 to 10 or more hectares, perhaps a thousand people to more than two thousand. Smaller villages cluster around the larger centres, at first in the eleventh and twelfth century around Dembeni on Maore, then in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries around Mwali M'jini on Mwali, Domoni on Nzwani, and Mbachilé on Ngazija. Mosques were built, not only in the larger centres but also in villages. The first mosques were doubtless of wood-frame construction like the houses, but the kind of large-area archaeology needed to find them has not been done. Relatively large masonry mosques, able to welcome most of the Muslim men in the town were built on Nzwani at both

Domoni and Sima in the eleventh or twelfth century. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries these were followed by successively smaller and more elaborated mosques, the latest of which had mihrabs decorated with carved coral plaques with geometric decoration. This is probably because these larger towns had more than one mosque, but also because the older and more prestigious mosques were used by wealthy and important citizens, who built their own prestige by elaborating these mosques. Only when there are projects developing similar precise chronologies of the development of elite housing, palaces and fortifications will we be able to document archaeologically the rise of sultanates. Suffice it to say that the move of major centres from Mbachilé to Mazwini on Ngazija and Dembeni and Tsingoni on Maore are correlated with traditions of dynastic emergence.

References

- Allibert, C. 1992. *Le Point sur L'Archéologie de Mayotte (Archipel des Comores) pour la Période 8–13eme Siècle. Résultat des Travaux Menés Entre 1979 et 1991*. Fondation pour l'étude de archéology de Mayotte, Dossier No. 1. Paris: INALCO.
- Allibert, C., Argant, A. and Argant, J. 1983. 'Le site de Bagamoyo Mayotte, Archipel des Comores'. *Etudes Océan Indien* 2: 2–40.
- Chanudet, C. 1988. 'Contribution à l'étude de peuplement de l'île de Mohéli'. PhD diss., Institute Nationale des Langue et Civilisations Orientale (I.Na.L.C.O.) de L'Université de Paris.
- Chittick, H. N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*. Memoir 5. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Chittick, H. N. 1984. *Manda: Excavations at an Island Port on the Coast of Kenya*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. C. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. Memoir 14. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Knudstad, J. E. 1992. 'The early mosques at Sima and Domoni'. In 'Early Islam, oceanic trade, and town development on Nzwani: the Comorian Archipelago in the XIth–XVth centuries AD', edited by H. T. Wright. *Azania* 27: 81–128.
- Kus, S. M. and Wright, H. T. 1976. 'Note préliminaires sur une reconnaissance archéologique de l'île de Mayotte (Archipel des Comores)'. *Asie Sud-est le Monde Indo-insulien* 7 (2–3): 123–5.
- Liszkowski, H. D. 1999. 'Commerce et navigations à Mayotte et dans le sud-ouest de l'Océan Indien pendant la période classique, XVe–XVIIIe siècle'. PhD diss., Paris, INALCO.
- Liszkowski, H. D. 2002. 'Le commerce d'escale au XVIIIe siècle, dans l'Océan Indien, à partir de nouvelles données archéologiques à Mayotte'. *Études Océan Indien* 33–4: 33–77.

Mason, R. B. 1997. 'Early mediaeval Iraqi lustre-painted and associated wares: typology in a multidisciplinary study'. *Iraq* 59: 15–61.

p.284

Pauly, M. 2011. 'Développement de l'architecture domestique en pierre à Mayotte, au xiii–xvii e siècle'. In *Civilisations des mondes insulaires (Madagascar, îles du canal de Mozambique, Mascareignes, Polynésie, Guyanes). Mélanges en l'honneur du Professeur Claude Allibert*, edited by C. Radimilahy and N. Rajaonarimanana, 603–32. Paris: Karthala.

Pauly, M. 2013. 'Acoua-Agnala M'kiri (Mayotte – 976). Archéologie d'une localité médiévale (11e–15e siècles ec), entre Afrique et Madagascar'. *Nyame Akuma* 80: 73–90.

Pradines, S. 2013. 'The rock crystal of Dembeni, Mayotte Mission Report 2013'. *Nyame Akuma* 80: 59–72.

Pradines, S. and Herviaux, G. 2015. 'Dembéni, un site urbain bipolaire? Mayotte, rapport intermédiaire 2014'. *Nyame Akuma* 83: 128–41.

Radimilahy, C. 1998. *Mahilaka: An Archaeological Investigation of an Early Town in Northwest Madagascar*. Studies in African Archaeology 15. Uppsala: Department of Archaeology and Ancient History.

Sinopoli, C. 1984. 'Domestic technology of the Dembeni Phase: Comorian ceramics'. In 'Early seafarers of the Comoro Islands: the Dembeni Phase of the IXth–Xth centuries AD', edited by H. T. Wright. *Azania* 19: 13–59.

Vérin, P. 1975. 'Les échelles anciens due commerce sur les cotes nords de Madagascar'. PhD diss., L'Université de Paris I: Sorbonne.

Wright, H. T. 1983. 'Notes préliminaires sur un ancien site Islamique de Mayotte'. *Asie Sud-est et le Monde Insulindien*, XII. Paris: CNRS-EEHS.

Wright, H. T. 1992. 'Early Islam, oceanic trade, and town development on Nzwani: the Comorian Archipelago in the XIth–XVth centuries AD'. *Azania* 27: 81–128.

Wright, H. T. 1993. 'Trade and politics on the eastern littoral of Africa: AD 800–1300'. In *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals, and Towns*, edited by T. Shaw, P. Sinclair, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, 658–72. London: Routledge.

28

MAHILAKA

Chantal Radimilahy

Study of the past in the southwestern Indian Ocean has been carried out through multiple disciplines including archaeology, the latter being the most relevant vis à vis the period prior to the fifteenth century CE. The southwestern Indian Ocean is characterised by a relatively uniform cultural complex, such that this archaeological case study can be seen as one that helps integrate both the specifics of life in northern Madagascar as well as that along the larger eastern African coast.

This chapter concerns Mahilaka, the first and earliest major town in Madagascar to have been studied archaeologically. Located in the island's northwest on the Bay of Ampasindava (Map 1, p. xxii), this once prosperous trading port was occupied from the tenth to fifteenth centuries CE, and was at its peak from the eleventh to fourteenth centuries. A set of radiocarbon dates (see [Table 28.1](#)) and imported artefacts allowed this chronology as well as the town's different phases of development to be established (Radimilahy 1998). We can credit the settlement's prosperity to its rich natural environment and favourable climate, a strategic location for maritime trade and communication, and the facility of access to the area from other regions. Currently the Ampasindava region is one of the richest of Madagascar, producing both cash crops and food crops. In addition to keeping small livestock, the population also practices fishing. Today, only the remains of a walled structure (possibly intended as a fortification) inside the town are visible, measuring about 4 metres above the ground surface.

[Table 28.1](#) Radiocarbon dates from Mahilaka

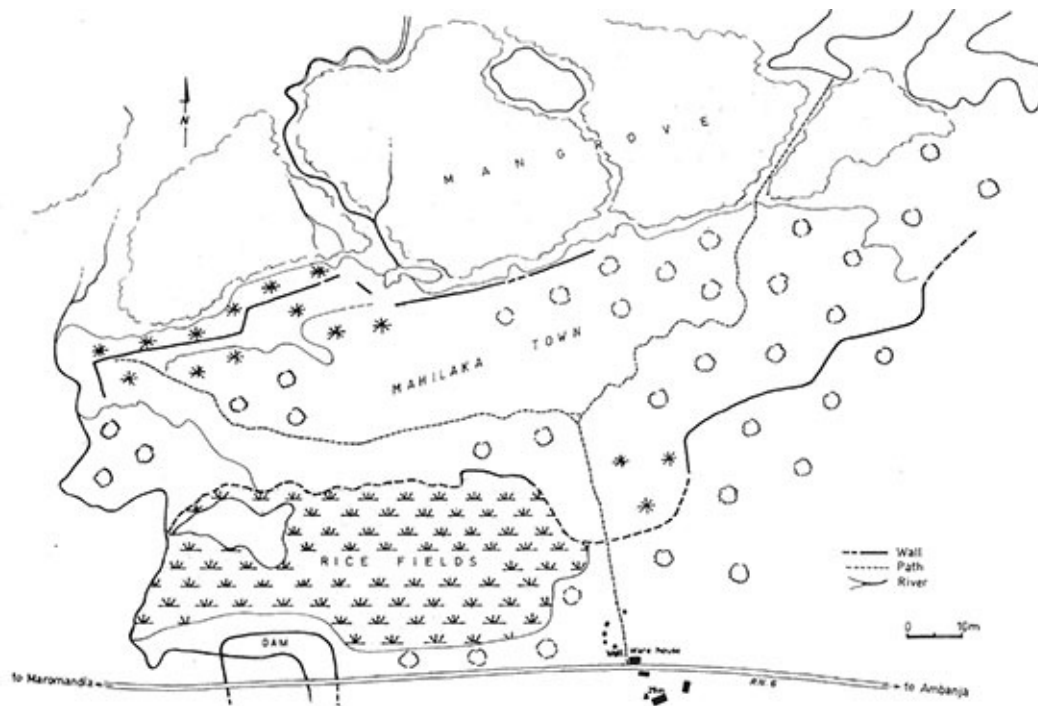
<i>Location</i>	<i>Lab number</i>	<i>Date bp</i>	<i>Calibrated CE</i>	<i>Cal. CE ranges</i>
Interior of the fort	Ua 3806	1175 ± 70	891	765–1001
Interior of the fort	St 12097	825 ± 70	1234/1236/1257	1147–1300
Interior of the fort	St 12098	1120 ± 160	979	650–1230
Stone construction (house)	Ua 3802	890 ± 45	1191	1037–1115
North west (perimeter wall)	Ua 3803	930 ± 90	1133/1136/1156	988–1276
North west (perimeter wall)	Ua 3804	910 ± 75	1161/1185	1018–1263
North (entrance of town)	Ua 3805	1030 ± 65	1004/1008/1019	934–1192

p.286

Mahilaka town

In the eighteenth century the French explorer Mayeur (1912) visited Mahilaka, the original name for which is unknown; the current name derives from the giant palm ‘mahilaka’ (*Bismarckia nobilis*). European discovery of the archaeological site was by colonist Millot (1912), who noted the ruins around 1910, made it his own concession, and initiated detailed reconnaissance. He documented and mapped the ruins, and collected artefacts which he sent to the Académie Malgache.

Subsequently, Poirier (1950) and Vérin (1975, 1986) carried out research at the site. Based on the imported ceramics from the Persian Gulf, Vérin concluded that Mahilaka was a trading centre, most prosperous from the eleventh to fourteenth century CE as noted above. Formerly surrounded by stone walls, the site measures some 2 x 1 km, extending over an area of *c.* 70 ha ([Figure 28.1](#)). Remains of the surrounding town wall and other stone-built constructions have been re-discovered through archaeological survey and excavations (Radimilahy 1998). Some foundations were buried more than 2 m deep, others from about 50 cm to 1 m deep. The enclosure wall, 80 cm thick on average, was probably accompanied by wooden palisades, justifying the shallow foundations of the structure. The probable entrance to the town – 5.7 m wide with a sub-foundation – was observed only on the interior part, near the mangrove in the north of the site. Large, well-cut and well-laid stones identify the wall here. Different sorts of stones such as basalt, coral stones, sandstones or stones from the neighbouring rivers in the area were used in the construction. There was also great variation in technique, with large blocks of rough stone carefully dry-coursed in places, and using lime mortar in other places; this suggests several different periods of construction.



[Figure 28.1](#) Map of Mahilaka

Many Swahili town settlements have some sort of surrounding wall. In each case the question must be asked: what was the real purpose of the walls? V  rin (1975) interpreted the c. 2.5 ha ‘fortress’ within the settlement as a refuge against attacks from inland populations. He dated the structure’s construction to the twelfth century CE. According to him, Mahilaka was a ‘mainland’ expansion of the Ambariotelo (lit. *the three islands*) settlement in the adjacent Bay of Ampasindava. The location and features in this archipelago, with the main island of Nosy Mamoko, seem actually to have been favourable to the Islamised. Fresh water was available and the islands were both close to the mainland and isolated enough to provide refuge (V  rin 1975: 641). Similar remains, such as ruins of stone houses, wells and identical artefacts including imports characterise both settlements. They would have been contemporary originally, with the terrestrial settlement dependent on those on the islands. Thus, in case of political concerns, the ancient inhabitants could flee from Mahilaka. Thereafter the latter was a prosperous trading centre until the fourteenth century.

p.287

The ‘fortress’ presented differences in its construction compared with the outer surrounding wall. The foundation (2.10 m broad) and the wall (1.05 m wide) on top of it, were built of well-laid and well-cut stones. The interior separated by inner walls was divided into quarters, corresponding to specialised activities. The fort was probably the residential area for wealthy people, perhaps the rulers of the town. The thickness of the wall may support V  rin’s hypothesis that it was for delimitation and defence. On the eastern African coast, at Manda (Kenya) and Kilwa (Tanzania) (Chittick 1974, 1984), the

stone walls are thought to have been built for protection against the sea.

Outside the fort to the east was the first mosque in Madagascar, built in the 1100s. Only foundations and sparse stones, likely from Ambariotelo, are visible today. In 1947, Poirier carried out restoration of the *mihrab* with modern cement. Vérin (1975) conducted excavations in the fort and in the mosque, for which he gave descriptions. The latter is simple, measuring 28 m by 8.70 m, and without columns to support the roof. Access was to the rear.

Other stone buildings at Mahilaka include domestic structures and shops. However, given the size of the site, its age and damage suffered from human activities over many years, few of them were uncovered. One structure of 9 x 7 m showed expansion over time, starting with two rooms, and later adding a veranda and store rooms. Other buildings could be as large as 16 × 14 m. Yet, after the abandonment of the town, most of the walls had fallen in entire panels and stones were collected by the local population.

Finally, south of the town, traces of walling delimiting a reservoir, possibly used for rice cultivation, have been identified. Indeed, rice remains were collected from excavations and this food crop was first attested in Mahilaka. Because of changes in the modern landscape, only one range of stones remained in its entirety, and in most places the walls were hard to trace (Radimilahy 1998). We thus depend on Millot's (1912) description of the structure. He noted the round-shaped dam of '150 m in diameter', 'formed by an earthen fortification of 2 to 3 metres high and topped by a stone wall', and which he considered to 'have solved the important issue of water, collected from streams running down the mountain' in the region. It was as wide as 'ten hectares and could store over 20,000 cubic metres of water A valve, of which no trace remains, had to exist at the output of the stream. Besides, to the west of the basin are traces of earth canals suggesting the water intake; and around the channels, many cluster of stones scattered from buildings'. Millot suggested the water in the dam was used 'for food and perhaps also for irrigation' (1912: 286).

Four main phases of growth (Ia and Ib), expansion (IIa) and decline (IIb), were established for the occupation of Mahilaka ([Table 28.2](#)).

When the site was first settled around the tenth century, people were most likely living in isolated homes and had already initiated trade activity. Occupation was preferentially sited to the interior and towards the mangroves area.

Then, in the eleventh century, the number of people increased and they spread to different areas. The Islamised population settled down, built the stone wall, the mosque and the residential houses. Trade developed, with Chinese imports adding to those from the Persian Gulf.

[Table 28.2](#) Phases of occupation at Mahilaka

<i>Period</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Size of occupation</i>	<i>Estimated number of inhabitants (based on current density in the region varying between about 14 to 50 per km²)</i>
Ia: <i>circa</i> 900	First human settlement	about 6 ha	about 100 to 300
Ib: <i>circa</i> 1000–1200	Development of trade activity Expansion from Ia	about 26 ha	about 350 to 1300
IIa: <i>circa</i> 1300	Expansion	about 70 ha	about 900 to 3500
IIb: <i>circa</i> 1400	final development and decline	about 60 ha	about 780 to 3000 at most

In the fourteenth century the settlement expanded and the population was at its peak, occupying the whole site. The inhabitants were engaged in various occupations indicative of a busy city life. The involvement of Mahilaka in the prosperous trading network with eastern Africa and Indian Ocean partners continued as well.

Finally, in the fifteenth century, Mahilaka town began to decline. Some areas were abandoned and activities concentrated in others. Due to overexploitation, significant natural environmental changes and a scarcity of possibilities, the population migrated to other regions where opportunities were available.

After this period, people abandoned Mahilaka and the Ampasindava region. They moved further south where previous activities were still continuing. Yet, when the Portuguese arrived in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, trade on the northwest coast to eastern Africa was documented.

Subsistence, craft activities and trade

The ancient inhabitants of Mahilaka cultivated rice, evidence for which has been recovered from excavations in domestic cooking contexts. They raised zebu cattle, goats, sheep, pigs and poultry including chickens and ducks. They also hunted and collected natural resources from the surrounding forest (tenrecs, wild birds, tortoises, various fruits) and practised fishing in open seas.

In terms of craft activities, local handmade pottery production was common and included various decorative motifs. There were few significant changes in ceramics through the periods of Mahilaka's occupation. The vessels were coated with red ochre, or sometimes graphite, and provided with a foot. The people also worked rock crystal and gold, forged iron, made glass beads from cullets of imported glass, produced textiles and chlorite schist vessels (Radimilahy 2012). Schist quarries are located in the northern and especially in the northeastern part of Madagascar, and along the eastern coast of the island. Remains of schist artefacts have been retrieved at Dembeni in the Comoros as well as at

other archaeological sites in eastern Africa, indicating the importance of trade between the various western regions of the Indian Ocean.

The Indian Ocean has seen many migrations following trade opportunities since at least the beginning of the first millennium CE, such as the export of spices from Southeast Asia. By the tenth century, an Arab navigator observed a fleet of a thousand *wakwak* boats, probably referring to Indonesian vessels, looting in the Mozambique Channel and seeking goods for their homelands and for China, the latter facing their own country. Southeast Asians most likely settled Madagascar and the Comoros (Allibert 2008). The arrival of these populations in the southwestern Indian Ocean continued towards the end of the twelfth century, when Arabs expanded their traffic to the East, taking the place of Indonesians, and traded directly with China, the west and the southwestern Indian Ocean.

p.289

Mahilaka, originally a Swahili town, clearly benefited from its proximity to both the sea and inland resources. Trade was among its main economic activities, and it was part of a network connecting eastern Africa, the western Indian Ocean and probably Southeast Asia. Archaeological research has revealed active commercial relations with the Comoros Archipelago through Mayotte, the southeastern-most island of the Comoros, from at least the eighth century CE (Allibert *et al.* 1989). Characteristic products of the period spanning the tenth to sixteenth centuries were discovered in Mahilaka, including beads, glass and imported pottery from the Persian Gulf, Arabia and China. Among exported products we can mention gum copal, rock crystal, chlorite schist and probably wrought iron. Due to the profusion of copal trees (*Hymenaea verrucosa*) in the area, and mention by Flacourt in the seventeenth century of the ‘Arabs’ and their ‘white’ descendants, who exported gum copal,¹ turtle shell, zebu . . . from the northern coasts, Millot (1912) concluded that this species was brought in and planted there. The gum copal retrieved in the archaeological site of Shara on the Hadramaout coast probably originated from Madagascar.

Commercial relations were supported by inland and inter-regional connections, where natural resources and raw materials were exploited for export. It is worth noting that, in other parts of Madagascar, archaeological sites contemporary with Mahilaka were probably involved in trade networking as well. Similar imports and evidence of exports have been retrieved, for example, in the Highlands (Rakotovololona 1994), on the east coast (Radimilahy 2011:12) and in the far south. In the southern part of the island, trade centres, locally called *manda*, dated to the tenth to the fifteenth centuries and enclosed by stone walls extending from 5 to 30 ha, have been discovered and excavated. As at Mahilaka, imported sgraffiato and glass from the Persian Gulf as well as Chinese pottery were uncovered in different sites such as Andranosoa, Andaro, Mandamerine and Mandan-dRamananga (Radimilahy 1981; Parker Pearson *et al.* 2010).

Based on the current state of research and results, it is difficult to hypothesise about the

political organisation of Mahilaka. The town must have played a dominant role in the region, however, taking into account its exceptional size, and that it had economic relations with the rest of Madagascar is quite clear.

Why was Mahilaka abandoned? Various hypotheses have been advanced and research is still looking for acceptable answers. Did the plague that affected the world around the fifteenth century reach Madagascar? Bones of rats and mice have been identified from the earliest levels of the site. These animals were possibly introduced into Madagascar through commercial boats. It is also probable that environmental change was the cause of the abandonment of Mahilaka. More substantial information is required regarding possible ‘destructive flooding events’ that may have affected coastal regions of Madagascar in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century (Schreurs and Rakotoarisoa 2012: 43; Preusser and Schreurs 2012: 348) or regarding changes in sea level.

Conclusion

Mahilaka was a Swahili town, in close contact with the Comoros, eastern Africa and probably also with Southeast Asia. The natural resources available in the vicinity of the site and the environment, coupled with the facility of circulation for commercial products, were often mentioned in written sources. Population groups, already installed, took advantage of this favourable environment for centuries. As the results of recent archaeological work are revising chronologies for the establishment of ancient settlement in the region, they increasingly support the assumption of early settlement pre-dating the town.

p.290

Note

- ¹ Flacourt was mixing gum copal from the ‘*arendrante*’ tree (*Hymenaea verrucosa*) ‘frequent on the shores of the sea and rivers’, with ambergris, another gum collected on the beaches and ‘burned by local people in their sacrifices’ (2007: 183, 223).

References

- Allibert, C. 2008. ‘Austronesian migration and the establishment of the Malagasy civilization: contrasted readings in linguistics, archaeology, genetics and cultural anthropology’. *Diogenes* 218: 7–16.
- Allibert, C., Argant, A. and Argant, J. 1989. ‘Le site de Dembeni (Mayotte, archipel des

- Comores), mission 1984'. *Etudes Océan Indien* 11: 63–172. Paris: INALCO/CEROI.
- Chittick, H. N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Chittick, H. N. 1984. *Manda: Excavations at an Island Port on the Kenya Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Flacourt, E. de. 1658 and 1661 (2007). *Histoire de la Grande Isle Madagascar*, nouvelle éd. annotée, augmentée et présentée par Claude Allibert. Paris: INALCO/ Karthala.
- Mayeur, N. 1912. 'Journal de voyage au pays des Séclaves fait en 1774 par moi, Nicholas Mayeur en qualité d'interprète de M. Le Baron de Benyowsky, Commandant de l'Ordre de la Croix blanche teutonique'. *Bulletin de l'Académie Malgache* 10: 52–87, 93–156.
- Millot, L. 1912. 'Les ruines de Mahilaka'. *Bulletin de l'Académie Malgache* 10: 283–8.
- Parker Pearson, M. (Ed.) et al. 2010. *Pastoralists, Warriors and Colonists: The Archaeology of Southern Madagascar*. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports.
- Poirier, C. 1950. 'Réflexions sur les ruines de Maïlaka et sur les tombes anciennes de la région de Vohémar'. *Bulletin de l'Académie Malgache* 28, Nouvelle série (1947–8): 97–101.
- Preusser, F. and Schreurs, G. [2011] 2012. 'Dating sediments in coastal areas and potential applications for constraining the palaeo-environmental context of an archaeological site at Vohemar'. In *Vohemar, cité-état malgache*, edited by J.-A. Rakotoarisoa and C. Allibert. *Etudes Océan Indien* 46–7: 339–55. Paris: INALCO.
- Radimilahy, C. 1981. 'Archéologie de l'Androy – Sud de Madagascar'. *Recherche, Pédagogie et Culture IX* 55. Paris: Audecam.
- Radimilahy, C. 1998. *Mahilaka: An Archaeological Investigation of an Early Town in Northwestern Madagascar*. Studies in African Archaeology 15. Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala.
- Radimilahy C. 2011. 'L'archéologie des grandes embouchures, cas de l'Ivondro'. *Compte rendu du Colloque – restitution des travaux archéologiques d'Ambatovy*. Antananarivo: Académie Malagasy-Ambatovy.
- Radimilahy, C. [2011] 2012. 'Réflexions sur la production pré-européenne du textile dans le Nord de Madagascar'. In *Vohemar, cité-état malgache*, edited by J.-A. Rakotoarisoa and C. Allibert. *Etudes Océan Indien* 46–7: 161–76. Paris: INALCO.
- Rakotovololona, H. S. R. 1994. 'Ankadivory: témoin d'une culture de l'Imerina Ancien'. *Taloha* 12: 7–24.
- Schreurs, G. and Rakotoarisoa, J.-A. [2011] 2012. 'The archaeological site at Vohemar in a regional geographical and geological context'. In *Vohemar, cité-état malgache*, edited by J.-A. Rakotoarisoa and C. Allibert. *Etudes Océan Indien* 46–7: 27–49. Paris: INALCO.
- Vérin, P. 1975. 'Les échelles anciennes du commerce sur les côtes nord de Madagascar'. Lille: Service de Reproduction des Thèses.
- Vérin, P. 1986. *The History of Civilization in North Madagascar*. Trans. A. A. Balkema, Ed. D. Smith: Rotterdam.

Daily life

29

THE SOCIAL COMPOSITION OF SWAHILI SOCIETY

Stephanie Wynne-Jones

Understanding Swahili society

The social make-up of Swahili settlements before 1500 CE is surprisingly poorly understood. Scholars have asked ‘Who are/were the Swahili?’ (for example, Eastman 1971), attempting to categorise the coastal population as a whole, but few have thought about the ways society within the towns was differentiated and organised. As the chapters in this volume relate, we know a great deal about religion, trade, economy and material life for eastern African coastal populations as a whole over the last 1,500 years, yet there is little written about the individuals who comprised the social fabric before the sixteenth century arrival of the Portuguese. The situation after that is rather different, as histories written by Europeans and increasingly by coastal residents themselves paint a richer picture of society on the coast. This chapter focuses on the period before 1500 CE, exploring what can be said about the various groups who contributed to Swahili society through time. First, I review the ways that anthropologies of the contemporary coast have been used to extrapolate back to understand pre-colonial populations, both by the anthropologists themselves and by archaeologists seeking to populate the spaces of the material record before 1500 CE. I argue here that the historical context of those ethnographies should be taken into account, inevitably limiting their usefulness for understanding the deeper past. I then explore the understandings of Swahili society available from history and archaeology. Our ability to comment on the social composition of early Swahili society is limited, partly because very few archaeological studies have attempted to explore this. Nevertheless, this chapter tries to draw out a sense of gendered, ethnic and status categories in the precolonial past, through a combination of historical and archaeological sources.

Ethnographies

As Swahili society is still changing, the quest to characterise it offers something of a moving target. Archaeologists and historians of earlier periods on the coast often look to ‘contemporary’ anthropologies of the coast for social understandings that might be projected backwards into earlier periods, and yet ‘contemporary’ anthropologies soon start to read like histories themselves. A series of classic ethnographies of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Swahili coast have this sense to them. They offer invaluable insights into systems of land tenure, urban and village (although mostly urban) organisation, and social categories in coastal settlements in the twentieth century. Yet even the focus of these studies, which explore ethnic definitions, political economy and territory, seems to belong to another world from the urban modernities explored by twenty-first-century anthropologies, which position coastal residents firmly within the global village (Loimeier and Seesemann 2006; Simpson and Kresse 2008; Thompson and Stiles 2015). This may be why colonial-period ethnographies (Prins 1961; Middleton 1961) have been used as chronicles of a timeless Swahili world, reflecting centuries of tradition (see Bissell, this volume). The effects this has had on archaeological interpretation of earlier centuries are discussed below. Yet these ethnographies in fact describe a world of massive social change, with tensions between older coastal residents and more recent arrivals due to processes of Omani and European colonisation and large-scale forced migrations.

p.294

Prins (1961), for example, divides the ‘Swahili-speaking’ peoples into Arabs, Swahili and Shirazi; the first two are recent phenomena, while the oldest category is the Shirazi, the original elite of the coast. By the twentieth century, they are described as having ‘become’ one of several categories of coastal resident. In fact, the category of Shirazi draws on earlier tropes of Persian origins, and was claimed in a twentieth-century context in new ways that responded to the claims of other groups (Pouwels 1987; Ray, this volume). Yet, the Shirazi inhabit this ethnography like a fading aristocracy, their claims to elite status based on autochthony tempered by a declining grip on mercantile sources of wealth and social prestige that were increasingly claimed by Omani settlers and successful inland traders. They are ‘peasants with a glorious past’ (Prins 1961: 14). Shirazi identity is thus understood via certain characteristics – urbanity, claims to foreign ancestry – but the ways that past society is described are rather narrow. Political organisation is described, with a system of ‘kings’ entwined in varying ways with an oligarchic elite. All of the actors are male, all merchants, and all high status. Nineteenth-century Lamu, described by Ylvisaker (1979), was a world of these Shirazi institutions. She outlines an oligarchic structure, with strict status categories based on ownership and descent, and a series of political offices such as the *Mzale*, who governed rights in land, or the *Fundi wa bahari*, who oversaw fishing. As befits the nineteenth-century context, Ylvisaker also describes relationships between different categories of slave and free citizen, and the exclusion of women from

public life. The people described in these histories/ethnographies are the *waungwana*, seen as the Swahili ‘par excellence’ (Allen 1993), guardians of normative coastal civilisation, based on the concept of civility or *uungwana* (Middleton 1992).

On Zanzibar, Middleton (1961) describes the Hadimu in a similar vein. Hadimu are seen to be the oldest residents of the island, and most representative of pre-Omani culture. By the mid-twentieth century, the Hadimu exist among a network of other Swahili groups in a Zanzibar landscape shaped by centuries of Omani plantation agriculture (Croucher 2014). Rather than the urban elite described by Prins, here is a rural group, defined in opposition to the Omani elite who have populated the urban centres of the Zanzibar Archipelago. Yet, this is also a recent development, as the Hadimu are linked to older urban sites – such as Kizimkazi and Tumbatu – on Zanzibar Island. The system of land tenure described is fascinating, based on differentiation between areas of land within and beyond the settlement, with ownership of external lands mediated through ownership of trees, the latter a form of inalienable possession passed through family groups. There are similarities here to the organisation of villages on Mafia, described by Caplan (1982, 1998). As on Zanzibar, the Wabwera who populate northern villages on Mafia are linked to an urban past, associated with the sites of Kisimani Mafia and Kua. These groups, then, question the urban focus of ethnographies elsewhere, describing a world of rural Swahili, some of whom are linked to older, collapsed, urban places, yet both also chronicle a world in which those groups are under pressure from more recent immigration, the management of landscapes under various colonial regimes, and a growing political marginalisation.

p.295

Histories and social composition

Ethnographies of the Swahili coast are of course a form of history, a record of a place at a particular moment in time. These must be situated in a long tradition of outsiders writing about the inhabitants of the coast. Before the sixteenth century, historical mentions were mainly in the travelogues of Arab visitors; these are useful primarily as a guide to prominent towns at different periods, but tell us little about the people within the towns, beyond some very general observations (brought together in Freeman-Grenville 1962a, b). If anything, these serve to underline the existence of considerable diversity between and within coastal groups, yet they probably also represent a very partial experience and understanding among the chroniclers. As Indian Ocean traffic became more regular, and the Swahili coast developed as part of a broader zone of cultural interaction, these descriptions became more consistent and reliable. Ibn Battuta famously described the coast in 1331 CE, encountering a pious Islamic population in Mogadishu, Mombasa and Kilwa (Freeman-Grenville 1962a). He described a system of rulers or sultans in each place, and

gave insights into the existence of a merchant class (Fleisher 2004). His description – like all of those written by visiting scholars and traders – is less informative on any non-elite portion of the population, or on the relationship with groups beyond the walls of the town.

From the turn of the sixteenth century onwards, Portuguese documents give a picture of coastal society as it existed upon their arrival (Strandes 1961). Like their predecessors, the Portuguese dealt exclusively with the population of the towns. They describe a series of rich and sumptuous towns, dwelling on the details of the lavish palaces and accommodations, and the personal wealth of the population. Women (who it seems they encountered, suggesting a more public role than is found in more recent histories) were elegantly dressed in fine clothes and imported silks, adorned with gold and precious stones (Prestholt 1998).

These early histories are the narratives of outsiders. As such, they have significant drawbacks when attempting to use them as a lens through which to view the social composition of the coast before 1500 CE. The key drawback is that each deals with ‘the Swahili’ as a unified group. As outsiders, they encountered mainly the elite and the merchant classes, and it is difficult to glean any information on differences within those groups, or how they co-existed with non-elite groups or different specialists within the same social context. In more recent ethnographies and histories a complex society is outlined, but the complexity stems mainly from the interaction of the ‘older’ groups with a new world of immigrants and opportunities; the older inhabitants themselves are automatically essentialised as representing a more coherent pre-colonial identity. The definition of this unified identity for the early Swahili was a colonial project which later became a nationalist concern (LaViolette and Wynne-Jones, this volume).

Historians have more recently interrogated the early sources to create more nuanced understandings of Swahili society in different periods. In particular, the work of Randall Pouwels (1984, 1987) has added time depth to discussion of Shirazi identity, showing how it coalesced through time based on internal conversations about Islamic practice and relationship with different Islamic schools, and in dialogue with many other groups that make up coastal society. He has thus begun to break down the ‘*waungwana* complex’ (Vernet 2005: 15; Iliffe 2005). Thomas Vernet (2004) has likewise explored the world of the Lamu Archipelago at the time of Portuguese domination, showing how the world within the walls of the Swahili towns of Lamu and, particularly, Pate, was but a part of a wider world of interaction between merchants, farmers, pastoralists and other groups on the northern Kenya coast.

A series of scholars have also taken up the issue of women’s lives on the coast, challenging the overwhelmingly male narrative on the *waungwana* (Thompson and Stiles 2015). Extremely detailed studies by Margaret Strobel (1979; Mirza and Strobel 1989) have followed the lives and histories of women in Mombasa, showing that, through the

nineteenth century, women became less free in public life, but exploring their key role in the creation of *waungwana* society within the home. The theme of women having been more active in public life in previous centuries is commonly discussed, although the evidence from earlier centuries is limited. The Queen of Zanzibar was a key ally for the Portuguese during the siege of Fort Jesus, thus we know that women could hold political office. Strobel and Mirza also point to a female ruler of Mombasa in the thirteenth century, Mwana Mkisi (1989: 7). Kelly Askew (1999) provides a useful summary of these hints and mentions, as well as advancing the idea that women's public role would have been linked to performance and dance, some of the arenas where power and belonging were negotiated in Swahili society.

p.296

The inclusion of women is a welcome addition to our understandings of the social composition of Swahili society. As well as having a supporting role in dominant *waungwana* society, several of these historians have highlighted the disreputable side of women's activities, which frequently involved aspects of 'traditional' ritual practice and medicine (Strobel 1979). This is still seen today, with women continuing to dominate in spirit possession cults and dance societies found in Swahili centres (Giles 1987; Larsen 2008). Carole Eastman (1984, 1988) has taken this furthest, suggesting not just a seamier side to *waungwana* society, but an alternative *wanawake* (women) society with which it was in tension. She suggests that *wanawake* society was much more 'Africa-inspired' than the 'Arab-derived' *waungwana* culture, since women would have experienced cultural influences differently, being less involved in the currents of Islam described by scholars such as Pouwels. She goes on to detail evidence for hinterland/pastoralist culture on the northern Swahili coast, suggesting it is disproportionately represented within female aspects of coastal social life.

Moving back in time

How can any of these insights be applied to Swahili society before 1500 CE? At this chronological juncture there is a separation of the disciplines, as the vast majority of evidence for the period before the arrival of the Portuguese comes from archaeology. This provides a new challenge to the dominant model of elite society, since the nature of the discipline is democratising, favouring mundane, everyday practice and identity. Yet it is notable that rather than applying some of the nuanced approaches to social composition that are produced by historians of later periods, archaeologists have tended instead to draw on ethnographies of the urban elite in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In some instances, ethnographic understandings of recent periods have been grafted more or less wholesale onto earlier times. For example, Chapurukha Kusimba (1999: 139–

41) describes four categories of person – *waungwana* (elites); *watumwa* (domestic slaves); *wazalia* (freed slaves); and *wageni* (guests) – on the pre-colonial coast, using descriptions directly from Ylvisaker's (1979) work in Lamu. These are categories that represent some of the enduring challenges of coastal society, such as the relationship between elites and non-elites, and the ways that outsiders were understood, yet direct evidence before the nineteenth century is lacking. Slaves and freed slaves, in particular, are elusive categories in the archaeological record (Kusimba 2004). This type of explanation is possible because of an archaeological tradition on the Swahili coast that has only rarely looked at variation *within* Swahili sites, exploring instead the characteristics of sites as a whole. Since work has also tended to focus on stone buildings and imported goods, there is an orientation towards the elite in archaeological understandings which complements that in the ethnographic literature (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2015). Thus, faced with an archaeological record that has documented a somewhat homogeneous material signature, archaeologists have turned to the ethnographic data for the heterogeneity that they know must have existed in the past.

p.297

This type of explanation has nevertheless sometimes produced some interesting results, exploring rhythms and continuities in the material past. Linda Donley-Reid (1987, 1990), for example, combined ethnographic research among the Lamu elite with archaeological excavations targeted at the material signatures of Swahili identity creation within the home. She found regularities linked to public and private spaces and identities, which were readily explained within the world of *uungwana*, with interior spaces linked to purity, privacy and the lives of women. Donley-Reid then projected these explanations back in time to the start of domestic building in stone, in the thirteenth–fourteenth century. This work helped to understand material continuities in stone-house construction and occupation, yet also projected twentieth-century worldviews and social categories backwards in time with very little support beyond superficial similarities of building style (Wynne-Jones 2013a; Fleisher 2015; Meier 2016).

A more convincing approach was taken by Mark Horton (1994, 1996) in attempting to account for the spatial variation he encountered in excavations at Shanga. This was a discussion that began from what he had found in the lowest levels of the town, and was thus more than a simple projection of ethnography to fill an archaeological gap. Long-term excavations at Shanga (Horton 1996, this volume) recovered the most complete information available on the layout of an urban settlement from the eighth century onwards. In particular, the levels from the eighth to eleventh century suggest a differentiated society, with different parts of the site linked to differing housing styles, craft activities and diet. Horton (1994) has interpreted this as representative of internal divisions within coastal society, linked to ethnic differences and occupational specialisms. He sees a distinction between (Bantu) agriculturalist and (Cushitic) pastoralists reflected in house style and particularly in the faunal record of domestic occupation. There is support

for this interpretation in the linguistic record, which suggests that the original towns were places where multiple groups came together (Pouwels 1987: 13–14; Ray, this volume). In describing and explaining this diversity, Horton tacks back and forth between archaeology and the ethnographic record. The original town plan of Shanga was arranged around a central open space containing a well, public buildings and, from the late eighth century, a mosque. Horton suggests that different groups in the town might have included pastoralists, craftspeople and merchants, and that they controlled access to the central space through different *milango* (doors, sing. *mlango*). The town plan of the early site therefore becomes literally a map of the social composition of the town, divided between occupational specialisms and, by extension, ethnic groups. This finds some ethnographic support in the use of the term *mlango* for different clans in contemporary Swahili towns like Mombasa. As such, Horton provides one of the only attempts to relate spatial and artefactual differences in the archaeological record to a differentiated population. Ethnographies are used as a guide to understanding the material record, but the result is also something of a chronological jigsaw, moving between eighth and ninth century Shanga, *kaya* sites of the Kenyan hinterland, seventeenth-century Takwa, and twentieth-century Mombasa and the Comoros.

A similar juxtaposition of archaeology and ethnography is found in the volume on *The Swahili* by Horton and Middleton (2000). As an archaeologist and an anthropologist, they brought together a unique wealth of data on Swahili society, and yet the two disciplines remain somewhat separate in their writing. The chapter on the ‘urban landscape’, for example, discusses evidence for the spatial planning of settlements from the eighth century onwards, followed by a discussion of the town as the seat of an *umma* (Muslim community) with detail drawn from nineteenth-century Lamu and twentieth-century Zanzibar. Some statements appear to draw the two together, such as the assertion that the system of moieties is ‘a basic defining feature of all Swahili towns and has the structural function of making unity through opposition’ (p. 130; see also Pouwels 1987: 36). Yet the evidence from the archaeology and the detail from the ethnography largely simply co-exist in the chapter, implying that they constitute a descriptive whole. Here, then, is an implicit projection of the ethnography onto the archaeology, yet without acknowledgement, and therefore without analysis.

p.298

There is, then, something of a challenge here, in exploring the world of Swahili society before the sixteenth century on its own terms. There is a rich ethnographic and historical tradition for the later centuries, and historians have shown that it is possible to explore it in nuanced and diachronic ways. There is also a wealth of archaeological data for Swahili settlement, both urban and rural, from the seventh century onwards. What can be said about the makeup of Swahili society from this evidence is naturally dictated by the research agenda of the archaeologists concerned and how far they explored internal variation within settlements. This kind of understanding is hampered by the test-pit

approach to archaeology that has flourished on the coast, defining chronology and material associations for a site rather than exploring the remains of past lives within it (compare Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2012; Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2016). The reason that Horton's direct historical approach was successful was due to the strength of his primary data from Shanga. This is not available for all sites or all periods. It is also difficult to excavate categories of person directly, in a way that would compare to understandings from the more recent past.

Archaeological identities

Archaeology on the Swahili coast has mostly focused on the major urban centres, the most visible and iconic settlements of the coastal past (Kirkman 1964; Garlake 1966; Chittick 1974, 1984; Abungu 1990; Horton 1996; Chami 1998; Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2015). In general, archaeological research has sought to define the characteristics of the population as a whole; methodologically this has converted into a tendency toward small excavation units, exploring variation over time through the stratigraphy of the trench, rather than variation over space or between parts of a settlement. This has nonetheless allowed an understanding of the changing face of Swahili society through time.

The earliest permanent settlements on the coast date from the seventh century onwards, and seem to have been home to a mixed population of farmers, fishers and craftspeople. This is seen in the archaeological record of crops and crop production (Walshaw 2010, 2015), and a faunal record with a predominance of fish and shellfish (Quintana Morales and Horton 2014), but with small stock and cattle represented throughout. In these earliest sites there was also a high proportion of game, suggesting a population of specialised or sporadic hunters (Prendergast *et al.* 2016). Iron slag, bead grinders and debris from rock crystal production all suggest that craft production was happening within the population of the sites (LaViolette, 'Craft', this volume). The social organisation of producers and their crafts is difficult to reconstruct, but this is likely to have varied between sites. At only a handful of sites is there any evidence to explore variation between households or parts of the site, and these excavations suggest different arrangements in different places. This is the time period for which Horton modelled a divided settlement at Shanga, suggesting that different types of producer occupied different parts of the settlement. At Tumbe, on Pemba, household-level excavations have suggested household-level production, with evidence for crop-processing, bead production and fishing all from the same homesteads. This suggests less specialisation between groups at the site (Flexner *et al.* 2008; LaViolette and Fleisher 2009; Fleisher, this volume). In each case the society within the settlement was probably shaped by its integration into a wider community in the surrounding region. Shanga and the northern Kenya coast have a hinterland in which there is a significant pastoralist population. Oral histories of the northern Swahili and Mijikenda suggest an ongoing interaction with pastoralist groups (Allen 1993); this is also visible in aspects of

the archaeology, notably ceramic traditions (Abungu 1988, 1990; M'Mbogori 2015). It is thus perhaps unsurprising to find a more distinct presence of pastoralist economies in early Shanga. The site, like those elsewhere on the coast including Tumbe, probably acted as a place where multiple groups could come together; the particular groups varied depending on the population of the surrounding region. These first coastal sites were part of a wider network of settlement in eastern Africa, and probably contained an ethnically mixed population that had many similarities with the hinterland. Although Islam was present on the coast (Horton 1996; Fitton and Wynne-Jones in press), it was apparently not a majority religion at this time, and may have been one more factor in the diverse mix that characterised these early coastal sites. There is no particular reason to link that religion to any merchant 'class' at this time and, in fact, evidence from Pemba suggests that imported goods derived from trade were spread throughout the population, both within the town and in transactions with a broader countryside population (Fleisher, 2010a). Coastal sites were engaging in overseas trade and might perhaps be categorised as 'emporia', places where a mixed population came together (Wynne-Jones 2013b), yet that diversity was domesticated, embodied in settlements at a household level.

p.299

From the eleventh century, archaeology gives a greater sense of coastal or 'Swahili' society as a distinct material phenomenon, as assemblages at coastal settlements became more different from hinterland assemblages (Chami 1994; Horton 1996; Kusimba 1999; Fleisher 2010b; Pawlowicz 2012; Wynne-Jones 2007a, b, 2016). This is evident in particular through the changing built environment of the town, although some developments in the material record also suggest a developing social world. The widespread construction of mosques in coral 'stone' evokes one key aspect of social identity that became increasingly important in these centuries as the coastal population came to be defined by Islamic practice. The stone houses that began to populate some coastal settlements from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries suggest something subtly different as they imply status rather than religion: the presence of a rich elite class with new ways of living and of structuring the area of the town. This elite was certainly linked to trade, and the gradual division of settlements into areas of 'stone' and 'non-stone' may reflect a new means of converting the proceeds of international commerce into local prestige. At Songo Mnara in the Kilwa archipelago, excavations have for the first time explored the ways that life was structured through the spaces of the town, including a series of grand stone houses (Wynne-Jones 2013a). These have confirmed a slightly different way of life linked to the stone houses, and including elements of material display. Yet these excavations have also shown that the inhabitants of stone houses did not have exclusive access to imported goods; status and a mercantile monopoly may not therefore have been completely overlapping phenomena.

Ironically, as Swahili society came more into focus as a definable entity through these centuries, the amount that can be said about variation within that society is perhaps less

than for the late first millennium. From the eleventh century onwards, coastal sites were more distinct from those of the hinterland, largely because of the growth of stonetowns and the development of urban life within them, but also visible in the material culture of the town. This period has not been as well represented in studies focusing on identity; Swahili identity is by the second millennium assumed to have coalesced into the urban, mercantile, elite and Islamic (we might perhaps add male) society known from the ethnographies. While the hunt for 'origins' in first-millennium sites meant that multiple identities have been recognised, they are often for this period glossed into a single Swahili identity, with little internal distinction. Clearly, emporia developed into more permanent forms of urbanism with entrenched merchant classes, a process known from all parts of the globe. There is an overall trend to the archaeology of these periods that suggests that much of the production activity shifted outside the limits of the towns during the second millennium. Seventh- to tenth-century sites contained significant quantities of iron slag and the debris from the production of beads, the shaping of ivory or rock crystal. By the later period, the crafts found within the town were more specialised, such as cloth production or the minting of coins (LaViolette, this volume). The bulk trade in metals, ivory, wood and other materials that is attested in the histories must have been supplied from outside the town. Perhaps, then, Swahili sites themselves were also becoming more specialised? This may have been the case, and yet it is hard to imagine that these towns, increasingly networked with a broader Indian Ocean region, became less diverse as a result. As ever, direct evidence is lacking. Yet, as discussed above, historians have shown that the *waungwana* society developed only in the eighteenth and particularly the nineteenth century, and that this development represented a narrowing of diversity, a lesser role for women, and a more narrowly defined sense of who and what might be deemed Swahili/Shirazi. This suggests a continued diversity among the population of the early second millennium.

p.300

Modes of differentiation

What archaeology is, however, able to offer is a long-term perspective on some of the material signatures of life on the coast. These evoke some of the *modes* by which society was internally differentiated, which can also draw in some of the more recent social categories. They provide a longer-term view on some of the important ways that social composition was experienced and negotiated, thereby allowing us to explore how it varied in different periods.

Permanence, ancestry and links to place

In the developing architectural tradition of the coast, we can view more than a simple

shift of aesthetic preference or disposable income. The construction of mosques, and especially tombs, in stone represented an investment in a place that linked particular families to the developing urban environment (Wilding 1988; Wilson 1979). Tombs were the site of ongoing activity and memorialisation, with offerings of food, ceramics, stones, coins and plant materials such as palm fronds placed around them, possibly many years after their construction. These acts maintained the ties that families and communities had to the landscape of coastal towns and reaffirmed their position in coastal society (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2016). Structured deposits are also found beneath the floors of stone houses. These may have had a ritual function (Allen 1979; Donley Reid 1987; LaViolette 2004) but they may also have represented an investment of value in the space of the house, with objects such as carnelian or aragonite beads and money built into the foundations of houses (Wynne-Jones 2013a; Perkins *et al.* 2014). Like the tombs, these were a claim to place, with households investing very literally in the foundation of their house or household. These practices find an echo in some of the identity claims made by Swahili groups in more recent years, with claims to indigeneity and longevity of tenure (Brennan 2012), and to 'ownership' of the spaces of Swahili sites (Middleton 1992) being key aspects of political manoeuvring and identity negotiations. The importance of permanence, and claims to ancestry, can thus be traced back through material practices. Although it is not possible (in fact, it seems not desirable) to talk of these earlier Swahili as *waungwana*, some of the tropes that define the *waungwana* probably stem from this long back story (Wynne-Jones 2016). We might perhaps suggest that the social composition of Swahili society was in the past negotiated through some of these claims, suggesting the presence of long-established families and prominent individuals, either mercantile or religious, who made claims to permanence in particular spaces. This further suggests the presence of a more itinerant, shifting population, against which they were measured (Pearson 1998). Allen (1979) suggested that permanence was a key feature of the stone house, and its function was as a guarantee of deals transacted with foreign merchants. The numbers of those merchants were probably always quite low, and the signalling of permanence might instead have been a social strategy among local residents, to define and distinguish themselves in a diverse population, perhaps somewhat like the multi-ethnic emporia implied by the archaeology of Shanga.

p.301

Consumption, largesse and display

In the nineteenth century conspicuous generosity and largesse became a crucial medium for negotiating status on the Swahili coast. Glassman (1995) has described the importance of feasting as a means of creating social obligation and clientship, converted to social capital. Prestholdt (2008) describes that in nineteenth-century Mombasa this generosity was entangled with a web of social and religious lore, which dictated that the appropriate mode of using wealth was to redistribute it rather than to amass a great fortune. Yet these

examples are also the end point of a much longer trajectory that can be traced in the material record of coastal sites (Wynne-Jones 2015). Feasting can be recognised in the archaeological record from at least the eleventh century (Fleisher 2010c) and perhaps even earlier; it is possible that the record of Early Tana Tradition ceramics relates to practices of communal consumption and conspicuous generosity. Certainly the archaeological record of the coast points to the importance of particular modes of consumption from the earliest settlement, such as in the record of ‘tablewares’ and particularly bowls that accompanied jars and cooking pots at coastal sites from their first occupation (Wilding 1989; Wynne-Jones 2016). From the start, it seems that the practice of consuming food was distinctive in coastal communities, linked to a specific repertoire of material culture based on individual bowls that were often highly decorated. In some instances, particularly rich deposits have also been linked to the area of the mosque, suggesting a link between religion and large-scale consumption.

Yet largesse was not only displayed through the provision of food, and wealth in Swahili society was also turned to the purpose of display. In places like Chwaka and Kilwa Kisiwani, it is known that individual patrons sponsored construction of the mosque (Sutton 1998; LaViolette 2004; LaViolette and Fleisher 2009), and that this was a route to social prestige. Other forms of display included the tombs already referred to, which often contained inset imported bowls or niches for the display of other objects. Stone houses – themselves an important form of display – provided a setting for the display of fine objects, cloth wall hangings, imported ceramics and Islamic texts. The imported bowls often displayed in these settings have been linked by Fleisher (2010c) to the feasting practices testified to by midden deposits, with the suggestion that it was their ability to reference competitive feasting that gave them social power. It is likely that many aspects worked together to create the power of display in Swahili society; a form of conspicuous consumption that in turn referenced other forms of largesse, as well as commercial and religious networks.

Access to distant worlds and cosmopolitanism

The emphasis placed within Swahili society on external connections has often been discussed and is an enduring feature of the discussions above (for example, Middleton 1992; Horton and Middleton 2000). Colonial-period attempts to categorise eastern Africans as either ‘native’ or ‘non-native’ famously contributed to turning this running trope into an issue of ethnic definition, as many coastal residents came to consider themselves non-native (Salim 1976; Willis 1993; Glassman 2000). In earlier periods there is little reason to believe that this was seen as an ontological issue, but rather that coastal society was outward-looking in many aspects, a feature that Pouwels (1987: 2) described as being ‘geared for change’. LaViolette (2008) preferred the term ‘cosmopolitan’ to describe the openness of coastal society towards the outside world, and the way that Swahili society domesticated and absorbed elements from overseas without losing its essential character.

The archaeological record offers myriad examples of this outward-looking tendency, as coastal residents traded with foreign partners from the earliest settlements onward, and became an Indian Ocean society, with foodstuffs such as rice (Walshaw 2010), material goods such as ceramics, beads and cloth and, above all, Islam, absorbed into the daily lives of coastal residents. The claims to overseas connection encountered by historians in later periods can be seen in the language of objects from earlier centuries, in the mosques and spaces of the town, and in the middens, which describe a rich international way of life.

p.302

Discussion

These modes by which social life was structured and negotiated seem to have been long-standing features of coastal life. As such, they give an insight into the priorities of coastal residents and some of the process by which coastal society was composed. They are dynamic features rather than social categories, and this is perhaps appropriate to the task in hand. The archaeological record upon which we rely for the centuries before 1500 CE does not easily yield evidence for definable social groups. Instead, in any period, we can explore the ways that society was negotiated, through claims to place both near and far, and through social practices of consumption and display. These can begin to give a sense of coastal society in a certain time and place. Yet, as discussed above, Swahili social composition is and was a fluid phenomenon; it is perhaps the outward-looking mode of production that encompasses that best, with the recognition that it was a society 'geared for change', and being negotiated in the context of an expansive worldview. Some parts of that society remain frustratingly elusive. Readers may have noticed that many of the histories discussed early in this chapter warn against assuming that women were passive in early Swahili society, yet they slip from view when the discipline shifts to archaeology. In fact, that should not be the case, and many of the aspects discussed were probably the concerns of women, including the record of ceramics, both cooking and tableware, the assemblage of beads and ornamental objects found in the spaces of Swahili towns, and much of the economic production seen as different craft communities. Yet it is not possible to draw out women as a definable category in earlier periods without relegating them to particular spaces or activities. Further research is clearly required, along the lines of the scrutiny applied to the categorisation of Swahili origins through the definition of groups in early sites. Yet the result will almost certainly be a bewildering array of groups, objects and practices, as coastal groups drew on similar tropes and modes by which to create their own Swahili communities.

References

- Abungu, G. H. O. 1988. 'Ungwana on the Tana'. In *Urban Origins in Eastern Africa, Project Proposals and Workshop Summaries*, edited by P. Sinclair and S. Wandibba. Stockholm: The Swedish Central Board of Antiquities.
- Abungu, G. H. O. 1990. 'Communities on the River Tana, Kenya: an archaeological study of relations between the delta and the river basin AD 700–1890'. PhD diss., University of Cambridge.
- Allen, J. de V. 1974. 'Swahili architecture in the later Middle Ages'. *African Arts* 7 (2): 42–84.
- p.303
- Allen, J. de V. 1979. 'The Swahili house: cultural and ritual concepts underlying its plan and structure'. In *Swahili Houses and Tombs of the Coast of Kenya*, edited by J de V. Allen and T. H. Wilson, 1–32. London: Art and Archaeology Research Papers.
- Allen, J. de V. 1993. *Swahili Origins: Swahili Culture and the Shungwaya Phenomenon*. London: James Currey.
- Askew, K. 1999. 'Female circles and male lines: gender dynamics along the Swahili coast'. *Africa Today* 46 (3): 67–102.
- Brennan, J. 2012. *Taifa: Making Nation and Race in Urban Tanzania*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Caplan, P. 1982. 'Gender, ideology and modes of production on the coast of East Africa'. *Paideuma* 28: 29–43.
- Caplan, P. 1998. *African Voices, African Lives: Personal Narratives from a Swahili Village*. London: Routledge.
- Chami, F. 1994. *The Tanzanian Coast in the Early First Millennium ad: An Archaeology of the Iron-Working, Farming Communities*. Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Uppsaliensis.
- Chami, F. 1998. 'A review of Swahili archaeology'. *African Archaeological Review* 15 (3): 199–218.
- Chittick, H. N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*. Nairobi and London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Chittick, H. N. 1984. *Manda: Excavations at an Island Port on the Kenya Coast*. Nairobi and London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Croucher, S. 2014. *Capitalism and Cloves: An Archaeology of Plantation Life on Nineteenth-Century Zanzibar*. New York: Springer.
- Donley-Reid, L. W. 1987. 'Life in the Swahili town house reveals the symbolic meaning of spaces and artefact assemblages'. *The African Archaeological Review* 5: 181–92.
- Donley-Reid, L. W. 1990. 'A structuring structure: the Swahili house'. In *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space*, edited by S. Kent, 114–26. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Eastman, C. M. 1971. 'Who are the Waswahili?' *Africa* 41: 228–36.
- Eastman, C. M. 1984. 'Waungwana na Wanawake: Muslim ethnicity and sexual segregation in coastal Kenya'. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 5: 97–112.
- Eastman, C. M. 1988. 'Women, slaves and foreigners: African cultural influences and group processes in the formation of northern Swahili coastal society'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 21 (1): 1–20.
- Fitton and Wynne-Jones in press 2017. 'Understanding the layout of the early coastal settlement at Unguja Ukuu, Zanzibar'. *Antiquity*.
- Fleisher, J. B. 2004. 'Behind the Sultan of Kilwa's "rebellious conduct": local perspectives on an international East African town'. In *African Historical Archaeologies*, edited by A. Reid and P. Lane, 91–124. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.
- Fleisher, J. B. 2010a. 'Housing the market: Swahili merchants and regional marketing on the East African coast, seventh to sixteenth centuries AD'. In *Archaeological Approaches to Market Exchange in Ancient Societies*, edited by C. Garraty and B. Stark, 141–59. Boulder: University Press of Colorado.
- Fleisher, J. B. 2010b. 'Swahili synoecism: rural settlements and town formation on the central East African coast, AD 750–1500'. *Journal of Field Archaeology* 35: 265–82.
- Fleisher, J. B. 2010c. 'Rituals of consumption and the politics of feasting on the eastern African coast, AD 700–1500'. *Journal of World Prehistory* 23 (4): 195–217.
- Fleisher, J. B. 2015. 'Situating the Swahili house'. In *Theory in Africa: Africa in Theory*, edited by S. Wynne-Jones and J. B. Fleisher. London: Routledge.
- Fleisher, J. B. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2012. 'Finding meaning in ancient Swahili spatial practices'. *African Archaeological Review* 29: 171–207.
- Flexner, J. L., Fleisher, J. B. and LaViolette, A. 2008. 'Bead grinders and early Swahili household economy: analysis of an assemblage from Tumbe, Pemba Island, Tanzania, 7th–10th centuries AD'. *Journal of African Archaeology* 6 (2): 161–81.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1962a. *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the First to the Earlier Nineteenth Centuries*. London: Clarendon Press.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1962b. *The Medieval History of the Coast of Tanganyika: With Special Reference to Recent Archaeological Discoveries*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Garlake, P. S. 1966. *The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Giles, L. L. 1987. 'Possession cults on the Swahili coast: a reexamination of theories of marginality'. *Africa* 57: 234–58.
- Glassman, J. 1995. *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast 1856–1888*. London: James Currey.

- Glassman, J. 2000. 'Sorting out the tribes: the creation of racial identity in colonial Zanzibar's newspaper wars'. *Journal of African History*, 41 (3): 395–428.
- Horton, M. C. 1994. 'Swahili architecture, space and social structure'. In *Architecture and Order*, edited by M. Parker-Pearson and C. Richards, 147–69. London: Routledge.
- Horton, M. C. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Iliffe, J. 2005. *Honour in African History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kirkman, J. S. 1964. *Men and Monuments on the East African Coast*. London: Lutterworth.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1999. *The Rise and Fall of Swahili States*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- Kusimba, C. M. 2004. 'Archaeology of slavery in East Africa'. *African Archaeological Review* 21 (2): 59–88.
- Larsen, K. 2008. *Where Humans and Spirits Meet: The Politics of Rituals and Identified Spirits in Zanzibar*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- LaViolette, A. 2004. 'Swahili archaeology and history on Pemba, Tanzania: a critique and case study of the use of written and oral sources in archaeology'. In *African Historical Archaeologies*, edited by A. M. Reid and P. J. Lane, 125–62. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum.
- LaViolette, A. 2008. 'Swahili cosmopolitanism in Africa and the Indian Ocean world, AD 600–1500'. *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress* 1: 24–49.
- LaViolette, A. and Fleisher, J. B. 2009. 'The urban history of a rural place: Swahili archaeology on Pemba Island, Tanzania, 700–1500 AD'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 42 (3): 433–55.
- Loimeier, R. and Seesemann, R. (Eds) 2006. *The Global Worlds of the Swahili: Interfaces of Islam, Identity and Space in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century East Africa*. Berlin: Lit Verlag.
- Mazrui, A. 2007. *Swahili Beyond the Boundaries: Literature, Language and Identity*. Athens: Ohio University Press. Ohio University Research in African Studies, Africa Series no. 85.
- Meier, S. P. 2016. *Swahili Port Cities: The Architecture of Elsewhere*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Middleton, J. 1961. *Land Tenure on Zanzibar*. London: HM Stationery Office.
- Middleton, J. 1992. *The World of the Swahili: An African Mercantile Civilization*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Mirza, S. and Strobel, M. (Eds) 1989. *Three Swahili Women: Life Histories from Mombasa, Kenya*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- M'Mbogori, F. N. 2015. *Population and Ceramic Traditions: Revisiting the Tana Ware of Coastal Kenya (7th–14th Century ad)*. Cambridge Monographs in African Archaeology 89.

Oxford: Archaeopress.

- Pawlowicz, M. 2012. 'Modelling the Swahili past: the archaeology of Mikindani in southern coastal Tanzania'. *Azania* 47 (4): 488–508.
- Pearson, M. 1998. *Port Cities and Intruders: The Swahili Coast, India, and Portugal in the Early Modern Era*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Perkins, J., Fleisher, J. B. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2014. 'A deposit of Kilwa-type coins from Songo Mnara, Tanzania'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 49 (1): 102–16.
- Pouwels, R. L. 1984. 'Oral historiography and the Shirazi of the East African coast'. *History in Africa* 11: 237–67.
- Pouwels, R. L. 1987. *Horn and Crescent: Cultural Change and Traditional Islam on the East African Coast, 800–1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Prendergast, M. E., Rouby, H., Punnwong, P., Marchant, R., Crowther, A., Kourampas, N., *et al.* 2016. 'Continental island formation and the archaeology of defaunation on Zanzibar, eastern Africa'. *PLoS ONE* 11 (2).
- Prestholdt, J. 1998. *As Artistry Permits and Custom May Ordain: The Social Fabric of Material Consumption in the Swahili World, circa 1450 to 1600*. Evanston: Northwestern University.
- Prestholdt, J. 2008. *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.
- Prins, A. H. J. 1961. *The Swahili-Speaking Peoples of Zanzibar and the East African Coast: Arabs, Shirazi, and Swahili*. London: International Africa Institute.
- Quintana Morales, E. and Horton, M. C. 2014. 'Fishing and fish consumption in the Swahili communities of East Africa, 700–1400 CE'. *Internet Archaeology*, 37.
- Salim, A. I. 1976. 'Native or non-native? The problem of identity and social stratification of the Arab-Swahili of Kenya'. *Hadith* 6: 65–85.
- p.305
- Simpson, E. and Kresse, K. 2008. 'Cosmopolitanism contested: anthropology and history in the western Indian Ocean'. In *Struggling with History: Islam and Cosmopolitanism in the Western Indian Ocean*, edited by E. Simpson and K. Kresse. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Strandes, J. 1961. *The Portuguese Period in East Africa*. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau.
- Strobel, M. 1979. *Muslim Women in Mombasa, 1890–1975*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Sutton, J. E. G. 1997. 'The African lords of the intercontinental gold trade before the Black Death: Al-Hasan bin Sulaiman of Kilwa and Mansa Musa of Mali'. *Antiquaries Journal* 77: 221–42.
- Sutton, J. E. G. 1998. 'Kilwa: a history of the ancient Swahili town with a guide to the monuments of Kilwa Kisiwani and adjacent islands'. *Azania* 33: 113–69.

- Thompson, K. D. and Stiles, E. 2015. 'Introducing gender, sexuality, and marriage into the study of Islam in the western Indian Ocean'. In *Gendered Lives in the Western Indian Ocean: Islam, Marriage, and Sexuality on the Swahili Coast*, edited by K. D. Thompson and E. Stiles, 1–30. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Vernet, T. 2004. 'Le territoire hors les murs des cités-états Swahili de l'archipel de Lamu, 1600–1800'. *Journal des africanistes* 74 (1–2): 381–411.
- Vernet, T. 2005. 'Les cités-états Swahili de l'archipel de Lamu, 1585–1810: dynamiques endogenes, dynamiques exogenes'. PhD diss., Centre de recherches africaines, Université Paris I Panthéon – Sorbonne.
- Walshaw, S. C. 2010. 'Converting to rice: urbanization, Islamization and crops on Pemba Island, Tanzania, AD 700–1500'. *World Archaeology* 42 (1): 137–54.
- Walshaw, S. 2015. *Swahili Trade, Urbanization, and Food Production: Botanical Perspectives from Pemba Island, Tanzania, 600–1500*. Cambridge Monographs in African Archaeology 90. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Wilding, R. 1988. 'Panels, pillars and posterity: ancient tombs on the north Kenyan coast. A preliminary study'. *Fort Jesus Occasional Papers*. Mombasa. 6.
- Wilding, R. 1989. 'Coastal Bantu: WaSwahili'. In *Kenyan Pots and Potters*, edited by J. Barbour and S. Wandibba, 100–15. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Willis, J. 1993. *Mombasa, the Swahili and the Making of the Mijikenda*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Wilson, T. H. 1979. 'Swahili funerary architecture of the north Kenya coast'. In *Swahili Houses and Tombs of the Coast of Kenya*, edited by J. de V. Allen and T. H. Wilson, 33–46. London: Art and Archaeology Research Papers.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2007a. 'Creating urban communities at Kilwa Kisiwani, Tanzania, AD 800–1300'. *Antiquity* 81: 368–80.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2007b. 'It's what you do with it that counts: performed identities in the East African coastal landscape'. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 7 (3): 325–45.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2013a. 'The public life of the Swahili stonehouse'. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 32: 759–73.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2013b. 'The East African emporia'. In *The World in the Viking Age*, edited by S. Sindbaek and A. Trakadis. Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2015. 'Biographies of practice and the negotiation of Swahili at nineteenth century Vumba'. In *Materializing Colonial Encounters: Archaeologies of African Experience*, edited by F. G. Richard and M. Dores Cruz. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2016. *A Material Culture: Consumption and Materiality on the Coast of Precolonial East Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wynne-Jones, S. and Fleisher, J. 2015. 'Fifty years in the archaeology of the eastern African coast: a methodological history'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 50 (4): 519–41.
- Wynne-Jones, S. and Fleisher, J. B. 2016. 'The multiple territories of Swahili urban

landscapes'. *World Archaeology*, 48.

Ylvisaker, M. 1979. *Lamu in the Nineteenth Century: Land, Trade and Politics*. Boston: African Studies Center.

30

METALS AND METAL-WORKING ALONG THE SWAHILI COAST

Bertram B. B. Mapunda

Introduction

It is almost impossible to write the history of the eastern African coast without consulting the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, a travel guide book written by an anonymous eyewitness, believed to be a ship captain or sailor who had visited the coast of eastern Africa around the middle of the first century CE. Written in Greek, the book provides valuable information regarding cultural, social, political, commercial as well as environmental aspects of the region at the time. Regarding metals, for example, the author states: ‘Into these market-towns [of the eastern African coast] are imported the lances made especially for them at Mouza [Muza], hatchets, swords, awls, . . .’ and from eastern Africa ‘Much ivory is taken away . . . and also rhinoceros horn and tortoise-shell, . . . and a little coconut oil’ (Collins 1990: 48–9).

Of importance to us here is the author’s observation that the eastern African coast was importing metal products, most likely made of iron. This is interesting not only because it talks about metals, but also because the idea of importing iron triggers queries in light of current archaeometallurgical evidence from the region. The site of Limbo, located 100 km south of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, was already producing a considerable amount of iron by the first century CE, and is believed to have been providing the coastal region (Schmidt *et al.* 1992; Chami and Mapunda 1998). Wherever field survey has been completed, evidence for iron smelting has been recovered along the length of the coast. Why, then, was the coast importing iron? By the twelfth century al Idrisi, an Arab traveller, writes that eastern Africa was exporting iron to India and Arabia (Freeman-Grenville 1962; see Horton 2004 for a critique of Idrisi’s report). So, when, how and why did the trend change?

This chapter attempts to respond to these questions and many more. It examines the

history of metals and metallurgy (the technology of metal production) in the region by probing into a broad spectrum of metals that have featured in one form or another in the cultural and commercial history of the eastern African coast, and accounting for their importance.

Metals and alloys in the historical context of the Swahili coast

Overall, there are over 100 metals and alloys that are in use today. Of these, only a handful were exploited by our ancestors two centuries and more ago, and are therefore of interest to archaeometallurgists. These include gold, platinum, copper, iron, silver, lead, aluminum, nickel, zinc, tin, potassium, arsenic, manganese and titanium. Some of these were not exploited as separate metals but only as alloys and, even then, not the whole range of possible combinations. Common alloys include bronze (copper with tin, and copper with arsenic), brass (copper with zinc), carbon steel (iron with carbon) and pewter (tin with lead). Of the various ‘archaic’ metals and alloys, the ones that have featured on any reasonable scale in the history of the eastern coast of Africa are gold, copper, bronze, brass, silver, lead and iron, and are therefore the focus of this chapter.

p.307

Gold

Gold is one of the first of two metals to be used by humans; the other is copper. Historians of metallurgy (for example, Tylecote 1976; Herbert 1984; Henderson 2000) argue that gold came first because of its unique properties: availability in its native form (as metallic nuggets or fine dust, ready to use, smelting not required), and its malleability, which made it easy to work and recycle. In addition, gold glitters, which makes it attractive to the eye; its high density (19.3 g/cm³) makes it distinctive from other ‘stones’ when held in the hand; it is resistant to weathering; and has a relatively low melting point (1064 °C; Henderson 2000). On account of its unique physical properties, gold must have attracted people and enticed them to collect and keep it for symbolic, aesthetic or other reasons long before the birth of metallurgy.

The earliest evidence of gold-working comes from fifth-millennium bce Neolithic cemeteries in Varna, Bulgaria (Henderson 2000). Gold acquired a special cultural value, used for rituals (for example, production of casts of deities and royal regalia), ornamentation and currency. In the same vein, gold was so frequently recycled that it is rare to find it in the archaeological record (Tylecote 1976); hence, even the dates given above could be younger than the actual start of gold metallurgy.

Gold featured prominently on the Swahili coast. Starting from the beginning of the second millennium CE, gold became not only pivotal in commerce but the backbone of

political and economic power for the rest of the Swahili period. Although some gold could have come from the immediate hinterland, especially considering that gold deposits are plentiful in the region (Kulindwa *et al.* 2003), conclusive evidence is lacking. It could well be possible that the coast received gold from Sasu, a famous gold mine reported by Cosmas Indicopleustes, an Alexandrian merchant and traveller in 525 bce (Freeman-Grenville 1962), as supplying gold to Aksum. But, again, there is no decisive evidence as to whether gold from Sasu, assumed to be located in southern Sudan (Allen 1993) or northern Kenya (Mathew 1963), or even south of the Rufiji River (Chami 2006), ever reached the Swahili coast, whether directly or via Aksum and Adulis. The source that has been ascertained so far is the Mwenemutapa Empire in modern-day Zimbabwe.

In Zimbabwe, gold was produced from both mines and alluvial deposits. From there Zimbabwean gold was transported to Kilwa and other Swahili trading centres through the port of Sofala, southern Mozambique. While the antiquity of this route is not clearly known, we are certain that during the heyday of Swahili civilisation (twelfth–fifteenth century) an elaborate traffic of merchant ships commuted between Sofala and Kilwa and other cities in eastern Africa, and from here Zimbabwean gold reached overseas markets including India, Arabia and China. It is estimated that over one ton of gold was exported from Zimbabwe every year (Pearson 1998).

Most – if not all – gold passing through the Swahili coast was raw or unforged. As Pearson notes, ‘. . . gold was almost never minted at Kilwa. Rather, gold was treated as a commodity, and it was exchanged unminted for Indian goods’ (Pearson 1998: 105). That is to say, the Swahili coast was a pipeline through which gold from Zimbabwe and perhaps other sources reached the rest of the world. That explains why the sum total of gold finds in the region does not even add up to a tenth of a kilogram as compared with hundreds of tons that passed through the coast during the entire period of the Swahili civilisation (Pearson 1998). In his extensive excavations at Kilwa Kisiwani, the renowned hub of gold trade in eastern Africa, Neville Chittick uncovered only four gold artefacts: (1) a gold bead measuring 2.0 mm in diameter and 1.5 mm in length; (2) a hollow bead with applied granules of gold around the orifice – ‘bought from a child who stated he found it on the beach’ (Chittick 1974b: 458); (3) a fragment of gold sheet, 9 mm long and *c.* 0.2 mm thick; and (4) three lengths of gold wire, 26, 10 and 8 mm long, gauge 0.4 mm, found wound round each other (Chittick 1974b). Other gold objects include 12 coins found at Mtambwe Mkuu, eastern Pemba Island (Tanzania), dating to the eleventh century CE, said to be of Fatimid mints or imitations of Fatimid issues (Horton *et al.* 1986; LaViolette, this volume), and three others found on Zanzibar but believed to have been minted at Kilwa (Brown 1991).

Nevertheless, it was gold that changed the socioeconomic and political status of the Swahili coast. As Mathew (1963: 112) noted, it was after gaining the mastery of the gold

trade that Sulaiman al-Hasan ibn Daud, King of Kilwa (1170–1188), ‘conquered as far north as Pemba Island, and . . . it is likely enough that it was at this period that Kilwa developed from a small trading settlement into a fortified town’.

Copper

From the start we should be cautious about identifying copper, which can be difficult to differentiate from alloys such as bronze, especially when dealing with archaeological materials, some of which tend to be quite weathered. It would not be surprising if some of the materials discussed below were mis-identified. For example, what a researcher called copper could actually be bronze or even brass. However, for the sake of convenience, researchers have been given the benefit of the doubt: the identifications used in the chapter are as per the respective researchers’ reports.

Copper, like gold, came early in metallurgical history, and from the available archaeological evidence it seems that copper use predates gold by almost four millennia. The earliest dated copper object is a small pendant found in the Shanidar cave in the Zagros mountains, Iraq, dating to the ninth millennium bce (Henderson 2000). Generally speaking, all early objects of copper are small items such as beads, pendants, rings, pins and awls and were made from native copper. Smelting of copper did not begin until the sixth millennium bce, and that was in Anatolia (Fagan 2004). Unlike gold, which started as a ritualistic metal, copper was a utilitarian metal from the very early days, used for weaponry, tools and utensils as well as ornamentation.

The history of copper along the coast of eastern Africa is quite different from that of gold. While gold featured prominently in its raw form as a commodity and is virtually missing from the archaeological record, copper was quite common in day-to-day usage and, for that reason, is well represented in the archaeological record. Furthermore, trade in raw (nugget) copper was not particularly common. This is intriguing given that copper-working, such as for coin minting, is evident along the coast. Crucibles have been unearthed at Kilwa Kisiwani, Kisiju and Manda (Harding 1960; Chittick 1974a, 1974b, 1984; Mapunda 2006a). In a spectroscopic examination that J. R. Harding conducted in one of several crucibles he found at Kisiju, a range of metals including copper (the dominant element), iron, arsenic, tin, silver, lead and calcium, as well as non-metallic elements such as silicon and carbon, were found. The Government Chemist in Dar es Salaam who conducted the analysis ‘was of the opinion that this particular crucible had been used for melting copper’ (Harding 1960: 136), very likely for the minting of coins.

Copper is reported to have been imported from Arabia, India and China (Mathew 1963; Chittick 1974a, 1974b, 1984; Herbert 1984; Anshan 2012). But, again, it is startling for eastern Africa to import copper when it is plentiful in the hinterland: from Kilembe in

Uganda, through Rwanda, western Tanzania, and the copper belt of western Zambia and southeastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Moreover, evidence for copper mining and working goes back to the fourth century CE, for example, at Kansanshi Hill, western Zambia (Bisson 1989; Msambachime n.d.). At the same time, cultural and commercial connections between the coast and central southern Africa through the Lakes Nyasa–Tanganyika corridor has been proven to have been in place since the Early Iron Age, with soapstone, evidently from Zambia or Zimbabwe, being among items of trade (Mapunda 2009, 2010).

All in all, copper objects have been found in almost every site along the coast and sometimes numerically exceeding iron, as at Manda on the Kenya coast: ‘objects of copper are about twice as common as those of iron’ (Chittick 1984: 203). Common items include coins, kohl sticks, rings, bangles, nails and needles. Found at almost every site, coins are always a welcome find by researchers as they are loaded with useful information pertaining to chronology, numismatic evidence, religious beliefs, location (places of origin), economic wellbeing, commercial networking, symbolic values and others (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2012). Most coins found along the coast were locally minted, mostly at Kilwa (Chittick 1974a, 1974b, 1984; Horton *et al.* 1986; Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2012). Kohl sticks are next to coins in frequency. These are thin rods, cylindrical at either end, with a square section in the middle, measuring 13–21 cm long and 0.3–0.5 cm in diameter ([Figure 30.1](#)). They were used for applying antimony or other materials on eyelids (Chittick 1974a). Finger rings were mostly made of a simple length of copper wire, the ends of which were butted together (Chittick 1974b). Miniature mirrors (7–8 cm in diameter), most likely used along with kohl sticks, have also been unearthed at Kilwa. Other objects include nails, bangles, needles, bells, bracelets, spoons, beads, weights, decorative keys and assorted fitments (Chittick 1974a, 1974b; Horton 1996).

Of all copper objects, coins are the only ones that are popularly accepted to have been locally produced (Chittick 1974a; Horton *et al.* 1986; Horton 2004; Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2012). Most of them bear names of local sultans, especially of Kilwa, signifying that they were minted there, even if they are found far from there in, for example, Zanzibar, Pemba and Shanga. But there is no reason why other small and simple objects such as nails, finger rings, bangles and needles would not be locally produced. This would include kohl sticks, which Chittick believed were imported simply because they were ‘similar to types found elsewhere in the Islamic world’ (1974a: 448). Fleisher and LaViolette (2013: 1158) make a convincing argument for local production of rings at Tumbe, northern Pemba. Of the 51 copper objects, including earrings, rings and needles unearthed there, two rings were inscribed with decorations echoing the Early Tana Tradition ceramic motif of incised hatched triangles ([Figure 12.1](#) in Fleisher, ‘Tumbe’ this volume). The resemblance between local pottery and the copper rings ‘cannot be coincidental’, the two researchers argue. They see it as providing ‘tantalizing evidence of the meaningfulness of these representations to their makers and users as part of a larger

field of such symbols’.

Bronze

Bronze, an alloy of copper and tin, is one of the most important materials in the history of metallurgy worldwide. Bronze emerged immediately after copper working and dominated weaponry, utensils and tools for almost three millennia, from the fifth to the second millennium bce. It was commonplace in the Middle East, Europe, Asia and the Far East. In Africa, bronze gained prominence mostly in the region north of the Sahara and the lower Nile, but was virtually absent in sub-Saharan Africa (Mapunda 2013). That perhaps explains why bronze objects are almost non-existent in the archaeological record of the eastern coast of Africa. Those reported so far include mirrors from coastal Kenya (Kusimba 1999), a lion figurine from Shanga (Horton 2004) and two artefacts from Kilwa, namely a triangular object believed to be the lid of an inkpot made from cast bronze (Chittick 1974b) and a bracelet (Pollard 2007). These objects, which were probably imported, date from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries CE.

p.310



[*Figure 30.1*](#) Kohl stick from Chwaka (Photograph by J. Fleisher)

Brass

Brass, a copper-zinc alloy, is even rarer along the coast than bronze. It is reported by Eric

Axelson (1940; quoted in Herbert 1984) as having figured ‘in a booty seized after the burning of Mombasa in 1505’. But, even here, Herbert (1984: 113) doubts ‘if indeed it is brass’.

Brass was, however, a common alloy in the royal palaces of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century interlacustrine kingdoms of Karagwe, Buganda and Bunyoro (Smith 1963). It dominated regalia and ritual bricolage. When John Hanning Speke and Henry Morton Stanley visited Karagwe in 1861 and 1876 respectively, they saw a number of small figurines of anchors, headless cows, ducks and elands made of brass, copper and iron. These and other objects were kept in what Stanley called the museum or armoury of King Rumanyika I (1853–1879) (Stanley 1878; Van Wyk 2013). It is not yet clear as to why this technology did not get to the coast, considering that trade and other forms of exchange between the coast and the interlacustrine region had been ongoing since at least the eighteenth century.

p.311

Lead

Lead, like gold and copper, is a native metal. However, because of its low melting point (327 °C) it can also be extracted easily from ores, the most common of which is galena (PbS). Lead is also ductile and malleable, which, along with other properties, made it one of the earliest metals to be smelted and, consequently, it has been found in several early contexts. The earliest lead artefacts are a bracelet from Yarim Tepe I and a bead from Jarmo in the Zagros Mountains, both in Iraq, and other beads from Çatal Höyük, Turkey; all dated to the sixth millennium bc (Henderson 2000).

A number of lead artefacts have been reported from the Swahili coast, a great proportion of which come from Tumbe, Pemba, with ‘25 pieces, ranging from 1–30 g, with two larger fragments of 44 g and 350g, mostly found in folded loops of strips, possibly for net weights’ (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013: 1158; see Fleisher, this volume). This has been referred to (*ibid.*) as a ‘surprising amount’, and indeed it is. Elsewhere along the coast lead is not only rare but also the artefacts are quite indeterminable, both morphologically and functionally. From Kilwa Kisiwani for example, Chittick (1974b) reports some small fragments of sheets including one 11 cm long; a flat spatulate object, 5.5 cm long; and a strip, one end rounded, 11 cm long. From Manda, Chittick (1984) again reports a conical object with a flat base and irregular upper surface, pierced off-centre, measuring 2.3 x 2.3 cm and weighing 30 grams; as well as a bell with the clapper made of lead and body of copper. From Mpiji, Felix Chami (1994) found two small coils which have been interpreted as weights for fishing lines. Except for the fishing-line weights, which could easily have been shaped and re-shaped by respective fishermen by hammering existing lead objects, the rest of these objects – the functions of which are difficult to determine – were probably imported.

Silver

Silver is also a native metal and its adoption goes back to the Bronze Age. Silver is sometimes found with gold as a natural alloy, called electrum. Deliberate separation of silver from gold goes back to the seventh century bce at Sadis, western Asia Minor (Henderson 2000). Other sources of silver could have been argentiferous lead ores such as galena and cerussite as well as jarosite, a non-plumbate ore.

On the Swahili coast silver was used mainly for the minting of coins. Evidence has come from Pemba, dating to the eleventh century, and Mombasa, in the sixteenth century (Horton *et al.* 1986; Pearson 1998). A total of 2,060 silver coins were recovered from Mtambwe Mkuu, Pemba, of which 650 were from a hoard pit and the remainder from the surface above. Based on style ‘and, in one case, name, . . . the Mtambwe silver coins are part of local Kilwa-type tradition’ (Horton *et al.* 1986: 118). The name referred to here is of Ali bin al-Hasan who minted copper coins at Kilwa. It is therefore believed that possibly the same person was responsible for minting silver coins found at Mtambwe Mkuu. ‘This possibility is strengthened by the discovery of 4 minuscule silver coins from Kilwa and Kisimani Mafia, apparently of similar type to the Mtambwe series’ (Horton *et al.* 1986: 118).

Although silver coins were locally produced, we have no knowledge of silver deposits along the coast. It was therefore imported and, apparently, not as nuggets but in the form of manufactured objects (ornaments, utensils and coins; Anshan 2012). Horton *et al.* (1986) are of the opinion that the silver used for local coin minting was recycled from imported coins. This is based on circumstantial evidence. They note that imported silver coins are rare along the coast, implying that they were recycled. Furthermore, the local silver coins were quite miniaturised to conserve the resource. For instance, the total weight of the 2,060 silver coins from the Mtambwe hoard was less than 250 grams (Horton *et al.* 1986). In addition, all the silver coins from coastal sites seem to have been early in the Swahili chronology, up until only the eleventh–twelfth century; this has been linked to a broader silver shortage in the Islamic world (Perkins 2014).

p.312

Apart from coinage, silver also appears in other objects, especially ornaments. From Kilwa Kisiwani, Chittick (1974a, b) found two large beads, inserted into wood, a practice common until the nineteenth century in Zanzibar; a D-shaped object, about 3.8 cm long; a finger ring, 2 cm in diameter; an earring, 1.4 cm long; and a buckle.

Iron

Iron is by far the dominant metal produced and used along the eastern coast, and indeed the whole of Africa. The earliest evidence of iron-working in eastern Africa comes from Karagwe, to the west of Lake Victoria, dating to 500 bce (Schmidt 1997). This was about

the average date when sub-Saharan African societies acquired the knowledge of iron-working, except for a few places in West Africa where it started two to three centuries earlier (Mapunda 2013). In Eurasia generally the Iron Age came after the Bronze Age. However, experimenting with iron started with the meteoritic type, within the Bronze Age in about the sixth millennium bce (Veldhuijzen 2013; Mapunda 2013).



[Figure 30.2](#) Iron slag from Vumba Kuu, Kenya (Photograph by S. Wynne-Jones)

The earliest iron-working site recorded so far on the coast is Limbo, on the central coast of Tanzania, dating to the first century CE (Schmidt *et al.* 1992). The pattern of spread both prior and after that date has not been firmly established. Nonetheless, metallurgical relics, especially slag and tuyere fragments, are a common encounter in archaeological excavations up and down the coast, evincing both continuity and intensity of the technology through time ([Figure 30.2](#)). A close examination of the history of iron technology along the coast, however, reveals three main punctuations (Mapunda 2002). The first covers the period from the start of iron-working technology along the coast (first century) to 800 CE. For convenience, we shall call this the Early Iron Working period (EIW). The second, referred to as the Middle Iron Working period (MIW) covers the next seven centuries, 800–1500; and the last, the Later Iron Working period (LIW), dates from 1500 to 1900 CE.

Early iron-working, 100–800 CE

So far we have one site that is typically coastal, Limbo, located 20 km inland from the central coast of Tanzania (Fawcett and LaViolette 1990; Schmidt *et al.* 1992). But in this group we should also include two other sites: Nkese, in the Usambara Mountains, northeastern Tanzania, located almost 100 km from the coast (Schmidt 1988), and Saghasa, in the Taita Hills, southeastern Kenya, located almost 200 km from the coast (Collett 1985). Although the latter two are away from the coast, timewise they belong in the same bracket as Limbo. In addition, they are located within the range of possible contact with the coast. The expansion of iron-working during the MIW period was probably influenced by these sites.

Limbo

The ceramics at Limbo are of typical Early Iron Age types, with fluted and bevelled rims closely related to Kware Ware, but including what are considered to be early pre-Kware features (Chami 1998). Iron smelting at this site employed the bloomery process, using bowl furnaces. There is also evidence of symbolism in the form of ritual pots buried below the centre of the furnaces (Mapunda 2006b), a practice known in much later periods among the Fipa of southwestern Tanzania (Mapunda 1995, 2010; Schmidt and Mapunda 1997). Domestic debris such as pottery and daub is mixed contextually with metallurgical remains such as slag and tuyere fragments, giving the tantalising suggestion that smelting was practised within residential areas. Strange as this may seem, Limbo is by no means unique in this, as several other sites, including Dakawa, 200 km west of Limbo (Haaland 2005) and Kabondo Kumbo in southern Zambia (Vogel 1984), have demonstrated a similar practice. What remains to be established is the means with which the residents protected the thatched houses evident at the site – both daub and postholes have been discovered (Mapunda 2006b) – from catching fire.

The huge amount of slag found at Limbo tells of the scale of work and volume of output. There is no doubt that Limbo was serving a wider market that involved exchange of some kind (Schmidt *et al.* 1992). So far no evidence of blacksmithing has been found, which means refining and/or forging was done elsewhere, or that exchange transactions involved blooms and not manufactured objects. So far one site has been identified as the most likely consumer of blooms from Limbo, and that is Nkukutu. Located 30 km south of Limbo in the northern Rufiji Delta, Nkukutu has yielded a total of 24 iron objects, mostly hooks and harpoons. The ‘presence of a relatively large amount of iron objects at this site indicates that this was a large scale forging industry’ (Chami and Mapunda 1998: 36). Since no smelting site has been found in the vicinity of the Rufiji Delta, the authors conclude that ‘the Rufiji delta was one of the main consumers of the iron produced at Limbo’ (Chami and Mapunda 1998: 36).

Nkese

Dating to the mid-second century CE, Nkese is interesting in its own way. The ‘smelting furnace showed that it was an EIA [Early Iron Age] furnace pit, similar in morphology and function to the EIA smelting furnaces of western Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi’ (Schmidt 1988: 36). In an eastern African context this is important evidence linking EIW sites back to a migration of Bantu speakers from this direction. Furnaces were built in bricks, above ground, and the associated pottery tradition is typical Urewe ware. There is no doubt that the technologies of the Usambara and the interlacustrine regions are related. Despite its importance and potential for understanding the development and expansion of iron-working technology in eastern Africa, Nkese has not been revisited for extensive work.

p.314

Saghasa

The site of Saghasa contains an interesting mixture of technological styles. It has both brick-constructed shaft furnaces similar to Usambara, and bowl furnaces reminiscent of Limbo (Collett 1985; Kiriamia 1987). The associated ceramics are Kwale ware, suggestive of affiliation with a contemporary coastal culture of the Kwale type in southeastern Kenya. Saghasa dates between 100 and 520 ce (Kiriamia 1987).

Middle iron-working, 800–1500 CE

During this period some serious metallurgical developments appeared along the Swahili coast. Iron smelting, deploying bowl furnaces, moved from the immediate hinterland to the shoreline and became the basic industry for every important settlement. Evidence for iron smelting has been reported from Kilwa Kisiwani (Chittick 1974; Chami 2006; Mapunda 2006a; Pollard 2007), Galu and Malindi (Kusimba and Killick 2003), Manda (Chittick 1984), and Chwaka (personal observation). A certain area in every settlement was designated for smelting. This was driven by both security (Kusimba and Killick 2003) and proximity to essential raw materials such as ore (Pollard 2007).

Blacksmithing was also intensified to cope with both the expanding supply of raw iron, and demand for utilitarian objects such as nails, needles, hooks, harpoons and knives, which seem to have been most prevalent at this time. As such, smithing slag, including saucer-shaped concretions, spherical droplets and hammer-scales, sometimes associated with actual tools and tuyere fragments, is quite dispersed across residential areas. This could indicate that a lot more people took to blacksmithing as an income-generating enterprise, or simply as a survival necessity that every household had to practice. Or, perhaps, just that the slag disposal system lead to such spread, as opposed to dumping all of

it at one point. There are also cases where forging took place along with smelting at those designated localities, as was the case with Galu (Kusimba and Killick 2003).

Swahili iron workers also seem to have advanced in technological sophistication. Analysis of iron and slag samples from Galu and Ungwana sites, dating to 1140–1280 CE, reveals that ‘Swahili ironworkers were capable of producing high-carbon steel and even cast iron in their bloomeries, . . . with over 2.5 percent carbon’ (Kusimba and Killick 2003: 108–9). This may as well mean that such places (for example, Galu and Ungwana) were producing crucible steel and, if not, then they were importing it from India or Arabia in the form of items made of crucible steel, such as swords and daggers (Kusimba and Killick 2003). Finally, MIW communities also exported iron. As mentioned at the outset, we hear this from al Idrisi, an Arab traveller to the region in the twelfth century (Freeman-Grenville 1962; Chittick 1984).

Later iron-working, 1500–1900 CE

The LIW period was characterised by the general decline of iron production and blacksmithing. Materials such as slag and tuyere sherds, which would dominate the lower strata (MIW) in the archaeological record, become less prominent in the upper layers (LIW) of coastal stratigraphy. Historically, this period coincides with the emergence of a new commercial order on the eastern African coast, steered first by the Portuguese and subsequently joined by most of western Europe and North America. One of the changes in the new commercial order was an increase in imported metalwares. Iron nails, for example, which were in high demand for the construction of marine vessels and initially locally manufactured, were now imported in bulk. Portuguese merchants, indeed, used nails as currency (Theal 1964).

p.315

In addition to trade items, Europeans came with lots of metallic devices and machinery, which sooner or later turned into scrap; eventually trade in scrap iron emerged. Richard Burton, an explorer who crossed Tanganyika in the mid-nineteenth century, witnessed caravans of local traders from the Pangani coast laden with re-traded iron heading to Uchaga and Umasaai (Burton 1872); while at Mombasa ‘iron goods were imported for resale to the people of the interior’ (Freeman-Grenville 1963: 151).

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to present a history of metal and metal working along the Swahili coast from the time when metallurgy emerged in the area around the first century

CE to the twentieth century. Seven metals and alloys that featured one way or another in this history have been presented: gold, copper, bronze, brass, lead, silver and iron. They each played a role in the socio-cultural and economic history of the Swahili coast. Gold, for example, was pivotal in commerce, fuelling the growth and expansion of trading centres, and enabling some to reach urban status. But as Kusimba *et al.* (2013: 401) note, ‘cities do not exist on their own but are tied to their hinterlands’. The gold re-sold along the coast was not locally produced, but came from the far hinterland through an elaborate trade system, the roots of which reach as far back as the Early Iron Age (Mapunda 2009; Masambachime n.d.) and perhaps beyond (Nelson 1993).

Copper and silver were used for coin minting. This was done locally, demonstrating not only the technological sophistication of the Swahili people, but also their autonomy. Besides coin minting, the two metals, together with bronze, brass and lead, dominated aesthetics. They feature variably in cosmetics and ornamentation including production of kohl sticks, mirrors, rings, beads and bangles. This also speaks to the tastes of the upper class of the time. As Prestholdt (1998: 9) notes:

In the context of the Swahili coast, the consumption of goods such as cloth, porcelain, furniture, and *precious metals* shaped and reflected social stratification. The prestige-value of these items could either magnify or contest the influence of individuals and lineages, and their exchange-value sustained the development of transcontinental relationships in the form of commercial transactions based on culturally relative demands.

(*Emphasis added*)

Iron was a broad-scope metal, both in terms of timespan and usage, featuring in commerce, subsistence and in a small way in ornamentation. During the EIW period, iron was an important commodity in intra-regional trade, though external export cannot be ruled out. Although the *Periplus* would like us to believe otherwise, the information provided therein on metals is not conclusive; as Casson notes, the book ‘lists certain places as importers of one or more of the following: iron, lead, tin, and copper. Yet, for some of these places, the metals said to be imported were available from sources in the near or at least not too distant vicinity’ (Casson 1989: 27–8). During the MIW iron was for sure exported, regionally and overseas. For example, by the close of the first millennium CE, Malindi had ‘large-scale iron smelting and forging industries and was the main supplier of most iron needed by hinterland societies’ (Kusimba and Killick 2003: 101). During the LIW period, iron was by and large imported, as utilitarian items and as scrap. Although the termination of indigenous iron-working can be attributed to many factors, it is scrap iron that brought its *coup de grâce*.

p.316

Besides commercial usage, iron offered specialisation for smelters and blacksmiths. The latter are more visible during the MIW and seem to have been responding squarely to the subsistence needs of the Swahili people, not only by producing tools of labour such as hoes, knives, nails, needles, hooks and harpoons, but also by residing and working within

the community. The items produced by these artisans also inform on the kinds of activities that were going on in the region at respective time periods. For example, during the EIW period the toolkit was dominated by harpoons and hooks (Chami and Mapunda 1998) reflecting preoccupation with fishing, whereas the kit expanded to include nails, knives and needles during the MIW. The increased supply of nails, for example, may reflect the rise in the production of maritime vessels, which in turn informs of transfer from the sewn *mtepe*, dominant throughout the EIW, and which did not need nails, to joint-timber types of vessels such as the double out-rigger canoe (*ngalawa*) and dhows (*mashua*) or *jahazi* that required nails. Such technological advancement would also imply venturing into deep sea for fishing and expanding the maritime commercial frontiers that Swahili merchants could reach.

To sum up, this chapter has tried to demonstrate archaeologically that metals are not limited to technology. Just like pottery, beads and other artefacts, metals are invaluable in reconstructing our past. Accordingly, the coast has an extraordinary role to play because, luckily, it preserves a solid record of metallic remains compared with the hinterland. The acidic tropical soils in the interior of Africa are apparently more corrosive to metals than the calcitic, coastal soils. Iron Age archaeologists should therefore take advantage of the coastal environs, especially bearing in mind that the coast and hinterland have been variably interacting through some sort of exchange since earliest times (Nelson 1993). We can therefore learn the history of the hinterland by studying the coast and vice versa.

References

- Allen, J. d. V. 1993. *Swahili Origins: Swahili Culture and the Shungwaya Phenomenon*. Nairobi: EAEP.
- Anshan, L. 2012. *A History of Overseas Chinese in Africa to 1911*. New York: Diasporic Africa Press.
- Bisson, M. S. 1989. 'Continuity and discontinuity in copperbelt and north-west province ceramic sequence'. *Nyame Akuma* 31: 43–6.
- Brown, H. W. 1991. 'Three Kilwa gold coins'. *Azania* 26: 1–4.
- Burton, R. 1872. *Zanzibar: City, Island, and Coast*. New York: Johnson Reprint.
- Casson, L. 1989. *Periplus Maris Erythraei*. Princeton: University Press.
- Chami, F. 1994. *The Tanzanian Coast in the First Millennium ad*. Studies in African Archaeology 7. Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis.
- Chami, F. 1998. 'A review of Swahili archaeology'. *African Archaeological Review* 15 (3): 199–218.
- Chami, F. 2006. 'The archaeology of pre-Islamic Kilwa Kisiwani (Island)'. In *The African Archaeology Network: Research in Progress*, edited by John Kinahan and Jill Kinahan, 119–50.

Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press.

- Chami, F. and Mapunda, B. B. B. 1998. 'The 1996 archaeological reconnaissance north of the Rufiji Delta'. *Nyame Akuma* 49: 62–78.
- Chittick, N. 1974a. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast, Vol. I: History and Archaeology*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Chittick, N. 1974b. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast, Vol. II: The Finds*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Chittick, N. 1984. *Manda: Excavations at an Island Port on the Kenya Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- p.317
- Collett, D. P. 1985. 'The spread of early iron-producing communities in eastern and southern Africa'. PhD diss., University of Cambridge.
- Collins, R. O. 1990. *Eastern African History*. New York: Markus Wiener Publishing.
- Fagan, B. M. (Ed.) 2004. *The Seventy Great Inventions of the Ancient World*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Fawcett, W. B. and LaViolette, A. 1990. 'Iron Age settlement around Mkiu, south-eastern Tanzania'. *Azania* 25: 19–26.
- Fleisher, J. and LaViolette, A. 2013. 'The early Swahili trade village of Tumbe, Pemba Island, Tanzania, 600–950'. *Antiquity* 87: 1151–68.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1962. *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the First to the Early Nineteenth Century*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1963. 'The coast, 1498–1840'. In *History of East Africa*, Vol. 1, edited by R. Oliver and G. Mathew, 129–68. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- Haaland, R. 2005. 'New perspectives on the technology and socio-cultural context of iron working at Dakawa'. In *Salvaging Tanzania's Cultural Heritage*, edited by B. B. B. Mapunda and P. Msemwa, 190–7. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press.
- Harding, J. R. 1960. 'On some crucibles and associated finds from the coast of Tanganyika'. *Man* 60: 136–9.
- Henderson, J. 2000. *The Science and Archaeology of Materials: An Investigation of Inorganic Materials*. London: Routledge.
- Herbert, E. W. 1984. *Red Gold of Africa: Copper in Precolonial History and Culture*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Horton, M. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. 2004. 'Artisans, communities, and commodities: medieval exchange between northwestern India and East Africa'. *Ars Orientalis* 24: 62–81.
- Horton, M. C., Brown, H. M. and Oddy, W. A. 1986. 'The Mtambwe hoard'. *Azania* 21:

- Kiriama, H. O. 1987. 'Archaeo-metallurgy of iron smelting slags from a Mwituu Tradition site in Kenya'. *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 42: 125–30.
- Kulindwa, K., Mashindano, O., Shechambo, F. and Sosovele, H. 2003. *Mining for Sustainable Development in Tanzania*. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1999. *The Rise and Fall of Swahili States*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- Kusimba, C. M. and Killick, D. 2003. 'Ironworking on the Swahili coast of Kenya'. In *East African Archaeology: Foragers, Potters, Smiths, and Traders*, edited by C. M. Kusimba, and S. B. Kusimba, 99–115. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.
- Kusimba, C. M., Kusimba, S. B. and Dussubieux, L. 2013. 'Beyond the coastalscapes: preindustrial social and political networks in East Africa'. *African Archaeological Review* 30 (4): 399–426.
- Mapunda, B. B. B. 1995. 'An archaeological view of the history and variation of iron working in southwestern Tanzania'. PhD diss., University of Florida.
- Mapunda, B. B. B. 2002. 'Iron metallurgy along the Tanzanian coast'. In *Southern Africa and the Swahili World*, edited by F. Chami and G. Pwiti, 76–88. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press.
- Mapunda, B. B. B. 2006a. 'Analysis report of metallurgical materials from Nguruni site, Kilwa Kisiwani, southern Tanzania'. In *The African Archaeology Network: Research in Progress*, edited by John Kinahan and Jill Kinahan, 151–66. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press.
- Mapunda, B. B. B. 2006b. 'Re-examining Limbo in regional and temporal contexts'. Unpublished Field Report submitted to the Antiquities Division, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
- Mapunda, B. B. B. 2009. 'The Indian Ocean and its hinterland during the Iron Age: evidence for socio-cultural interactions from southern Tanzania'. *Journal for Indian Ocean Archaeology* 5: 85–96/142–4.
- Mapunda, B. B. B. 2010. *Contemplating the Fipa Iron Working*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers.
- Mapunda, B. B. B. 2013. 'Appearance and development of metallurgy south of the Sahara'. In *The Oxford Handbook of African Archaeology*, edited by P. Mitchell and P. Lane, 615–26. London: Oxford University Press.
- Mathew, G. 1963. 'The East African coast until the coming of the portuguese'. In *History of East Africa*, Vol. 1, edited by R. Oliver and G. Mathew, 94–128. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- Msambachime, M. C. n.d. 'Mining and salt making in Zambia to 1920: a study of the "dying" indigenous industries'. Unpublished manuscript in author's possession.

- Nelson, C. M. 1993. 'Evidence for early trade between the coast and interior of East Africa'. Unpublished paper prepared for the WAC Mombasa Intercongress Conference volume. Available online at: www.chaz.prg/jarigole/TRADE.HTM.
- Pearson, M. N. 1998. *Port Cities and Intruders: The Swahili Coast, India, and Portugal in the Early Modern Era*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Perkins, M. J. 2013. 'The coins of the Swahili coast c. 800–1500'. PhD diss., University of Bristol.
- Pollard, E. J. D. 2007. 'An archaeology of Tanzanian coastal landscapes in the Middle Iron Age (6th to 15th centuries AD)'. PhD diss., University of Ulster.
- Prestholdt, J. G. 1998. *As Artistry Permits and Custom May Ordain: The Social Fabric of Material Consumption in the Swahili World ca. 1450–1600*. Evanston: Program of African Studies.
- Schmidt, P. R. 1988. 'Eastern expression of the "Mwitu" tradition'. *Nyame Akuma* 30: 36–7.
- Schmidt, P. R. 1997. *Iron Technology in East Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Schmidt, P. R. and Mapunda, B. B. B. 1997. 'Ideology and the archaeological record in Africa: interpreting symbolism in iron smelting technology'. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 16: 73–102.
- Schmidt, P. N., Karoma, J., LaViolette, A., Fawcett, B., Mabulla, A. Z., Rutabanzibwa, L. N. and Saanane, C. M. 1992. *Archaeological Investigations in the Vicinity of Mkiu, Kisarawe District, Tanzania*. Archaeological Contributions of the University of Dar es Salaam, Occasional Paper No. 1. Dar es Salaam: Archaeology Unit.
- Smith, A. 1963. 'The southern section of the interior: 1840–1884'. In *History of East Africa*, Vol. I, edited by Roland Oliver and Gervase Mathew, 253–96. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- Stanley, H. M. 1878. *Through the Dark Continent*. New York: Harper and Brothers.
- Theal, G. M. 1964; 1609. *Records of South-Eastern Africa*, Vol. I. Cape Town: C. Struik (PTY) Ltd.
- Tylecote, R. F. 1976. *A History of Metallurgy*. London: The Metal Society.
- Tylecote, R. F. 1980. 'Furnaces, crucibles, and slags'. In *The Coming of the Age of Iron*, edited by T. A. Wertime and J. D. Muhly, 183–228. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Van Wyk, G. 2013. 'The metal regalia of Karagwe'. In *Shangaa Art of Tanzania*, edited by G. van Wyk, 216–21. New York: QCC Art Gallery Press.
- Veldhuijzen, H. A. 2013. 'Early iron in the Near East, a review of evidence'. In *The World of Iron*, edited by J. Humphris and T. Rehren, 203–13. London: Archetype Publications.
- Vogel, J. O. 1984. 'An Early Iron Age settlement system in southern Zambia'. *Azania* 19: 61–78.
- Wynne-Jones, S. and Fleisher, J. 2012. 'Coins in context: local economy, value and practice on the East African Swahili coast'. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 22 (1): 19–36.

31

CRAFT AND INDUSTRY

Adria LaViolette

Introduction

What was the role of local craft production in Swahili society? This is a question for which we do not have good answers. We know how important consumption and materiality were in Swahili society (Wynne-Jones 2016), even if the production processes behind most of the material culture remain obscure. The handiwork of coastal men and women forms much of the basis for our constructions of Swahili society; but only occasionally do we locate evidence of manufacturing activities themselves, or feature these in our analyses. Systems of craft production, so central a concern in archaeology globally (for example, Costin 2001; Sinopoli 2011) and invoked so often in modelling socioeconomic organisation and political economy in ancient societies, remain peripheral to our understanding of – and questions about – the Swahili coast (Klein-Arendt 2000; Mapunda 2002). From the sixth century CE onward, Swahili produced a range of objects and structures: from houses and boats; to pottery, metal implements, shell beads, and clothing; to mats, baskets, rope, nets and leather goods.

Attempts to recognise a local material culture on the Swahili coast must take into account the position of this society at the intersection of two networks of connection. First, objects made and used by Swahili people – ceramics, iron goods, aspects of architecture, and much more that does not survive readily in the archaeological record – exhibit continuities with those made and used by neighbouring communities and those further inland, speaking to shared history and ongoing interconnectivity (see Horton and Chami, Kusimba and Kusimba, Pawlowicz, Ray, Walz, this volume). Over time, local craftspeople incorporated stylistic influences from diverse Indian Ocean partners as well. Thus, what was produced in Swahili towns and villages remained in conversation with multiple interlocutors, near and far: these include cloth and clothing, beads and other personal items, metal goods, literature and different aspects of architecture such as carved wooden and plaster elements (Brown 1988; Horton 2004; Killick 2009). Economies of

local, regional production and exchange and international networks were in fact intimately linked. In addition to production for local needs, coastal craft specialists and non-specialists (Hruby *et al.* 2007) contributed to long-distance exchanges with other societies in Africa and beyond the continent. They did this (in part) by providing their products in exchange for high-value goods supplied by non-coastal African groups, which were then exported via long-distance maritime trading partners. By the twelfth century there is evidence for Indian artisans living in Shanga, a pattern that we see in other coastal towns as time goes on (Horton and Blurton 1988; Lambourn 1999). Swahili craft and industry were thoroughly imbricated with other regional practices and the world of international trade and exchange from the sixth century onward.

p.320

The blurry line between ‘craft’ and ‘industry’ is not itself critical to this discussion. The distinction alludes to scale, one of the characteristics of local production that needs to be examined for each case. We might intuit that industry is a more appropriate term for, say, large-scale iron smelting (although all iron production was not large-scale), or the harvesting, processing and export of mangrove poles, or cloth-making for export. Early shell-bead production or basketry may seem more craft than industry. Together the terms are meant to represent the range of local material culture production. We can suggest that from roughly the sixth to tenth century the majority of local production was for local consumption, but there is evidence for exceptions to this: wider trade and exchange in some products – for example, iron, shell beads, mangrove poles – at least in certain places. Craft production came to play a broader role in inter-settlement, regional and long-distance trade and exchange into the second millennium. Many crafts and industries likely never grew proportionately larger over time, remaining local in scope, despite the abundance of the products (perhaps, for example, baskets, rope, most pottery, potentially mostly women’s work based on ethnographic analogy; Kusimba 1996). In the first two to three centuries of the second millennium, with increasing urbanisation, craft production likely continued to change and grow as some goods found different uses and markets, and as wealth accumulated unevenly. Others surely faded away as they were replaced by new technologies and sometimes imported options; by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries local production, and consumption of both locally made and imported goods, was surely happening on a scale unimaginable five to ten centuries before.

It bears repeating that we do not yet have a broad base of rich archaeological evidence on which to base this discussion. Attention to local craft and industry intensifies in the literature – mostly historical rather than archaeological – for the sixteenth century and after. Historians (including art historians, ethno-historians, historical linguists) have written about furniture making, stone-house construction, weaving, clothing and leatherworking, for example (Allen 1974, 1989; Brown 1988; Aldrick 1990; Prestholdt 1998; Meier 2016), research that can be put to use comparatively by archaeologists when discussing craft activities in earlier centuries, but cannot stand in for direct knowledge

about the latter. Even for recent centuries, artisans and systems of production are less the centre of study than what was produced and its impact on consumption patterns.

The discussion that follows is an attempt to address coastal craft and industry by featuring prominent forms of production over different periods between the seventh to sixteenth centuries. For the period *c.* 600–1000 CE, I focus on iron-working and shell-bead making, and for 1000–1500 CE, thread and cloth production, and coinage. I also discuss more briefly some other kinds of production. These centuries and even these crafts deserve more fine-tuned treatment than is now possible or than I have space for here; region by region there are also important differences. So, while this is in no way a definitive treatment of Swahili craft and industry, I seek to open a door to thinking more about local producers and production. Finally, by way of conclusion, I consider potential limitations and problems in Swahili archaeology, which contribute to why we know so much less about it than we do about these topics many other, arguably less tangible, sectors of Swahili life.

600–1000 CE

Although production seems to have been geared largely to village subsistence economy in the years 600–1000 CE, there are potential exceptions that demonstrate different scales of activity. As hundreds if not thousands of small villages flourished on the coast, with some emergent trading villages and even towns by 1000 CE, we see variation across settlements and regions evident in at least two different kinds of production: iron-working and shell-bead making.

p.321

Iron-working

Understanding Swahili iron-working has benefitted from widespread interest in iron's central role in broader sub-Saharan African transformations (Bisson *et al.* 2002). For example, Peter Schmidt brought long-standing research on iron in the Lakes region (1978, 1997, 1998) to the University of Dar es Salaam's Archaeology Unit (now Department of Archaeology and Heritage), which he co-founded in 1985 (LaViolette 2002). Subsequent research featuring iron production has been influential in shaping what we know about Swahili iron-working, with data from the Tanzanian coast and interior (Chami 1992, 1994; Mapunda 1995, 2000, 2002, 2010, this volume); and the Kenyan coast and near hinterland (Kiriama 1990; Kusimba 1993, 1996, 2009; Kusimba *et al.* 1994; Kusimba and Killick 2003; Kusimba and Kusimba 2003; Killick 2004). Research on iron continues (for example, Iles and Lyaya 2015).

What has been established is the important knowledge that Swahili iron-working grew

out of broader eastern African trends, based on bowl-furnace smelting and the smithing of the resulting bloom (Mapunda, this volume). This key finding underscores the indigenous origins of Swahili society (Kusimba *et al.* 1994). Evidence of early first-millennium (pre-Swahili), large-scale iron-smelting was recovered from the coastal hinterland south of Dar es Salaam, at sites such as Mkiu and Limbo (Fawcett and LaViolette 1990; Schmidt *et al.* 1992; Chami 1994), attesting to active iron production before the expansion of early Swahili villages. The connection between such early activity (mentioned in the *Periplus* and other early sources; Casson 1989) and eventual Swahili iron production is not entirely clear. Iron slag is recovered at nearly all Swahili sites 600–1000 CE and later, although whether each site was home to smelting, smithing or both frequently has not been determined (Kusimba *et al.* 1994). Only a few sites have evidence of smelting furnaces themselves (for example, Ungwana and Galu); as smelting probably took place outside domestic areas of settlements, its presence is not easy to confirm unless survey includes those areas. Smithing evidence is more abundant.

Based on the nature of finished products, smelting technology seems to have adhered to local processes even after regular ties to other iron-working regions in the Indian Ocean were established. According to Killick (2009: 196–203), while transfers from the Islamic world and India vis-à-vis literacy, aspects of architecture, ships and sailing, textile production and some mechanical devices took place, pyrotechnological transfers including metal-working and glass-making from raw materials, did not. A single metallographic study of 150 iron objects coming from coastal sites in Kenya (eighth–sixteenth-century deposits at Ungwana, Mtwapa, Shanga, Mwana and Galu), was carried out by Kusimba *et al.* (1994). The study showed exclusively local smelting of iron and steel; crucible steel was in the sample but identified as an import, and no such steel has been confirmed as a coastal product (Killick 2009). Although ilmenite sands are available as raw material for smelting in different regions of the coast, they were not the source of the iron tested in the above study, begging the question whether the near-hinterlands were supplying bloom to coastal sites, where local smiths were turning it into finished products (Kusimba *et al.* 1994). In more recent periods, coast and near-coast producers might have been supplying diverse groups to the interior with such products (Kusimba *et al.* 2013). This was probably the case in some regions, such as Mkiu above, but not necessarily the case for the whole coast, nor the full sweep of centuries during which iron was being made. This is the sort of question we cannot yet answer with specifics. There is also the interesting case of Dakawa (Håland and Msuya 2000), an interior site with ceramics of Early Tana Tradition/Triangular-Incised Ware types that link it to the coastal interaction sphere, and abundant evidence of iron production in the form of furnace remains and slag.

Though few iron implements are retrieved archaeologically due to poor preservation conditions (Kusimba 1996), clearly a great deal of iron was being made on or near the coast, and smelting was likely taking place in both coastal and hinterland settlements

depending on specific regional economies. Smiths were forging in many or even most coastal settlements, and iron bloom and goods seem to have been in active exchange within and between settlements, sometimes probably at a good distance.

This returns us to the question of the role of iron producers/production within early Swahili society. There is no definitive answer, yet. Shanga provides us with intriguing evidence, where Mark Horton (1996) located an iron forge in a clearing at the physical centre of the earliest, eighth-century level of the settlement, along with a well and evidence of a burned tree stump; this is near to where a series of superimposed mosques were also eventually located. A smithing location was also found at the centre of the fifteenth-century site of Songo Mnara (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2010). Archaeological, historical and ethnoarchaeological evidence tells us that blacksmiths in African societies have been everything from kings to respected artisans and mediators, to low-status, marginalised social actors, whatever the ubiquity of iron itself in each situation (Kusimba 1996; LaViolette 2000; Bisson *et al.* 2002). Kusimba (1996), in his comparative study of contemporary smiths from the Kenyan coast, broaches the complex issue of reputation, concluding that, in modern memory, coastal smiths (from Swahili and other groups) have been valued yet marginalised members of coastal societies, holders of ritual and spiritual power.

Enticing as it is to retrodict any recent depiction of coastal smiths, we cannot erase the centuries of history in between, especially given the drastically reduced importance of indigenous iron-working over the last 100–150 years as colonial governments repressed local production and encouraged trade in industrial scrap iron. The Shanga and Songo Mnara evidence itself is ambiguous: does the geographic centrality of those forges suggest that, in some early and medieval Swahili settlements, the importance of iron-working/iron-workers was being attested? Were iron-workers under the control of village leaders, in the case of Shanga, or were they themselves leaders? Smelters and forgers were sometimes the same people, and sometimes not, depending on local geographical and social circumstances; both may have been the case for early and later Swahili in different regions. The knowledge and skill behind both processes are not casually acquired, but neither is the work necessarily the realm of full-time specialists, removed from subsistence activities (LaViolette 2000). The supporting labour that went into wood harvesting and charcoal-making for smelting and smithing, for example, and the collaborations at the furnace or forge required for both processes to succeed (Kusimba 1996), make it likely that many men and women were involved in supporting roles with the (likely male) iron specialists. Swahili iron-workers could have been linked to potters, boat-builders or others producing the goods that were so central to their society and economy (Kusimba 1996).

Many questions remain as to if and how Early Iron Age regional traditions transformed in the context of Swahili society in the early centuries, and in the context of urbanism prior to the colonial period. The evidence thus far suggests that technology going into iron production did not change drastically (Killick 2009). Iron-working must have been a

core craft specialisation on the coast, with specialist knowledge likely controlled in some way from within the groups of producers themselves. While iron production was unlikely to have been organised at the household level in the sense that it was happening in most households, it could well be taking place within multiple households per village, by specialist lineage-based groups. Iron smelting and smithing slag is ripe for a comparative study, building on work by Kusimba *et al.* (1994) on multiple sites in a region spanning coast/interior, or multiple sites along a stretch of coast itself, to determine where iron bloom was being produced and how it may have been moving on the landscape.

p.323

Shell-bead making

Overall, the amount of information we have about shell-bead making pales in comparison to what we know about iron, but the relative durability of bead grinders provides an opportunity to say something about how production might have taken place, and could provide insights into other kinds of production that start small and can be scaled up. Chittick was the first to make the association between grooved local earthenware potsherds and bead-grinding (1974, II: 473; [Figure 31.1](#)) at early Swahili sites; I will call these grooved sherds, ‘grinders’. The vast majority are on local ETT/TIW sherds on coastal sites dating between 600 and 900 CE; sometimes sherds of imported ceramics (for example, Chittick 1984: 155; Chami 1994), and occasionally small stone slabs exhibit the hallmark semi-circular grooves we associate with grinding strings of roughed-out *Anadara* [sp.] shell blanks into small disk beads. Anything from a handful to 100–150 might be recovered from excavated sites dating 600–900 (i.e. in association with assemblages of ETT/TIW, even at inland sites such as Dakawa; Håland 2005). They may have been used for other kinds of grinding and sharpening, and persist in smaller numbers after 900, but are most closely associated with the years in question and bead-making (Flexner *et al.* 2008). Shell-bead making went out of practice in the late first millennium, but grinders in low numbers, some with larger grooves, continue in the archaeological record presumably for other purposes (for example, at Gede; Koplin and LaViolette 2008). Although squared-off shell blanks and beads are sometimes found in contexts that include grinders (for example, at Kilwa, Chittick 1974 II, and Manda, Chittick 1984), this is frustratingly atypical, likely due to soil preservation conditions for the shell.

At Tumbe (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013; Fleisher, this volume), a uniquely enormous corpus of 3,500+ grinders came from excavated houses and a community midden dated to the seventh to tenth centuries, although with no associated beads; the size of this assemblage inspired a study by James Flexner *et al.* (2008). A representative sample of 615 grinders was subjected to descriptive and quantitative analyses (at grinder and groove levels) to determine the degree of uniformity exhibited, for what this might reveal about social organisation around bead production at Tumbe.

The similarity of frequency distribution values between midden and domestic locations from which grinders were recovered suggests that production rates were similar from place to place within the village, with evidence of a skilled production technique but likely carried out part-time. This conforms with household specialisation, in which production fits into the existing rhythms of domestic activity, and is only part of how a craftsman is spending his or her time (Flannery and Winter 1976; Hagstrum 2001: 50–1). The considerable variation among the grooves themselves (range was 0.3–0.9 mm, with a concentration between 0.5 and 0.8 mm) suggested that numerous hands were involved, with little concern for uniformity in the exact bead diameter. As manufacturing debris, the grinders show significant variation; although made on broken potsherds, the grooving resulted eventually in breakage into units too small to be used. None of the analyses explain the enormous number of grinders at this one site (Flexner *et al.* 2008).

p.324



[*Figure 31.1*](#) Grinder made on local Early Tana Tradition sherd, for rounding shell beads, from Tumbe (Photograph: J. Fleisher)

In terms of what we can say about social organisation, there are a number of possibilities. One is that intensification here suggests increased control over distribution of finished beads to other locations, seen in shell-bead production in the Channel Islands, California (Arnold and Munn 1994). The beads may have been increasingly sought after as status or symbolic items locally, or in certain trade or exchange destinations, including locations further away from the coast; shell beads and other locally made products, including iron, may have been one basis on which other networks were eventually built

(Crowther *et al.* 2016).

Where seashells *per se* were exotic, such beads may have been in high demand, though other kinds of shell such as Achatina land snail were available and likely put to use for beads further inland (Chittick 1974, I: 236; Chami 1994: 45; Walz 2010). It is also possible that intensification in production was organised largely through horizontal forms of coordination (McIntosh 1991, 2005). In this case, a large number of people at Tumbe could be participating in bead production, but each on a small-scale basis allowing the village's overall bead output to be intensified without anyone controlling the production. This might be consistent with small-scale production of many kinds of quotidian goods in other villages, although was probably quite different from iron production, for example. The village life that characterised the period 600–900 or 1000 CE was not entirely the same from place to place. The scale we see at Tumbe is exceptional based on research to date, though perhaps not unique. The study of production there can at least trigger questions about contemporary sites, and how other less visible crafts might have been carried out. What we see here is how, in a world of villages, a part-time pattern of production can intensify based on increasing numbers of people doing it, when circumstances made that desirable, without it becoming more centralised.

Other early craft and industry

There is evidence for many other kinds of early production, but we have only a hint of the systems that might have been behind them. The widespread pottery-making that resulted in Early Tana Tradition/Triangular Incised Ware, so important to the paradigm change from foreign to indigenous Swahili origins and much more, has not been tackled as a production system *per se*, although the pottery itself is becoming well understood (Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2011; also M'Mbogori 2015). As with iron, ETT/TIW appears to have developed from earlier wares associated with regional mixed farming populations (Horton 1984; Chami 1994, 1998; M'Mbogori 2015). The ubiquity of incised pendant triangles, punctates and certain other design elements raised early questions about whether it was produced in a few places and distributed widely, or made locally while adhering to a consistent though flexible aesthetic. Research by Lindahl (1994) involving thin-sectioning of ETT/TIW sherds from Limbo (Chami 1994), showed that pottery there was indeed made of local clays. This suggests that the 'mental template' widely shared on the coast and interior had local variations (Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2011), and was reproduced by the hands of thousands of village potters over four centuries (Horton 1994; Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2011). Globally, most potters known historically were independent specialists who occupied the lower rungs of status hierarchies (LaViolette 2000; Stark 2003). The ubiquity of ETT/TIW in these early centuries of coastal settlement does not speak directly to the socioeconomic status of its makers, though later traditions of women producing pottery on the coast (Kusimba 1996) should at least raise gender, and potters' social status, as research questions (Costin 1996). Potter's marks on locally produced ceramics at Vumba

Kuu from the mid-second millennium are an intriguing find, and suggest that potters were marking their work for recognition (Wynne-Jones 2016: 107–108) in market settings or beyond.

p.325

Copper-alloy needles, jewellery and other small items were being cast and forged from imported materials (Mapunda, this volume) in the first millennium; from Tumbe, copper finger rings intriguingly bear the same cross-hatched pendant triangles as on necks of ETT/TIW pottery (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013, figure 5; Fleisher, this volume). In these same four centuries, people cut and prepared countless mangrove-tree poles for tens of thousands of coastal wattle-and-daub houses and other structures, as well as for export primarily to the Arabian Peninsula, undersupplied with its own wood resources (Villiers [1940] 2006; Walshaw and Stoetzel, this volume). From wood and fibre people made boats and sails (Gilbert, this volume), along with implements and doors, rope and string, and bark-fibre cloth; they tanned leather for clothing and other purposes, and wove baskets and mats. We know so little of the activities – embodied in actions of men, women and children, carried out part-time, some perhaps full-time – that yielded these quotidian goods in the context of families and households, settlements and society.

It is late in this same period when, at certain sites, people began building coral mosques (Garlake 1966). They utilised fine-grained *Porites* coral, which required divers to cut it from coral reefs, transport it back to shore and carve it immediately into building blocks and delicate decorative elements according to a builder's design. The process required preparation of lime, mixing of lime mortar and plaster (Sulas and Madella 2012), more mangrove, and thatch for roofing. Who was organising this labour and doing the work itself? Was it full-time (specialists moving from settlement to settlement?), or part-time?; was it corvée labour or some other form?; how did it differ at large and small sites? These questions remain to be fully addressed.

We complicate our imagining of early Swahili and their actions by picturing the broadest range of what they were making and using, and questioning the social context of those practices. Jeffrey Fleisher's (2008) discussion of what separate actions went into daily practice at Tumbe could be an inspiration in this regard, as could biographies of practice as discussed by Wynne-Jones (2016), and embodiment and *chaîne opératoire* approaches that might help flesh out the social, even phenomenological aspects of early production.

p.326

1000–1500 CE

As we know, the eleventh to sixteenth centuries were ones in which the development of

Swahili urbanism reached a peak, with numerous changes occurring in coastal and settlement political economy. Many such changes were in a dynamic relationship with the movement of people from inland to the coast, conversion of coastal residents to Islam, desires for new kinds of urbanity, increasingly stratified Swahili society, and deepening engagement with long-distance trade networks. Here, I consider two more kinds of craft production we know to have been important in these centuries, and what they suggest about the context of their production: cloth and coinage.

Thread and cloth

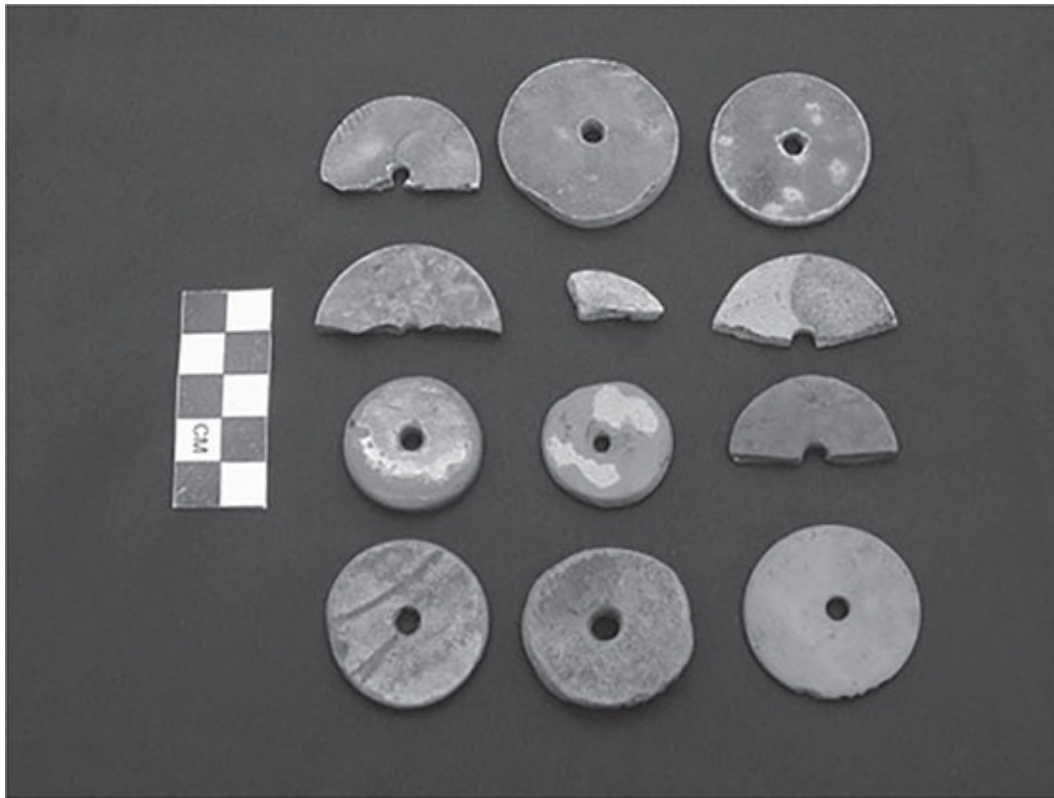
Cloth, whether transformed into clothing, or used in barter and gift exchange (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2016), became intimately tied to the performance and production of coastal identities such as gender, social rank and civility (Prestholt 1998; Horton and Middleton 2000: 111; Fleisher 2004). It is unfortunately an elusive class of materials archaeologically; historical information from mid-millennium and later overwhelms the scant archaeological evidence, but what we have is evocative. Before local manufacturing of cotton cloth on the coast, a variety of woven plant and tree fibres (such as kapok) as well as leather were probably the main source of coastal clothing (Brown 1988; Horton 2004); by the Portuguese period raffia fibre, still in use in the Comoros to make fine clothing, was not being noted in accounts of the mainland coast (Prestholt 1998). In late first-millennium Swahili sites, there is as yet no evidence of the cotton cloth that would become such an important local industry; at Tumbe (and the small village of Kimimba nearby), for example, Sarah Walshaw (2010) identified only a few seeds consistent with baobab and (wild) cotton. Also, as with other coastal sites of this period, there were no spindle whorls to indicate thread being spun (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013).

Just a short time later, however, by the founding eleventh-century levels of the nearby town of Chwaka, there is abundant botanical evidence for cotton (Walshaw 2010), plus spindle whorls ([Figure 31.2](#)), made of rounded local or imported-ceramic potsherds (at Shanga and Kilwa there are purpose-made terracotta examples; Horton 2004) in keeping with contemporary coastal trends (Chittick 1974; Horton 1996: 336–341; Kusimba 1996). Horton (2004) attributes this burst of cotton production to technology transfer from India (cf. Brown 1988). In the absence of robust botanical evidence from many sites, or the survival of wooden loom elements of any kind, spindle whorls are the major index for thread and cloth production. Shanga (Horton 1996, this volume) produced a variety of evidence for cloth production, beginning with spindle whorls from around 1000 CE, which peaked in number about a century later, and faded out *c.* 1300. Horton (2004) also located timber sheds attached to multiple houses with associated stone tanks dating to the fourteenth century, which he suggests could be related to cloth treatment and dyeing.

Increases in production of both thread and cloth during the early second millennium suggest growing demand for them locally, and its production for export to interior

continental locations and elsewhere, but by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries a reduction in spindle-whorl evidence suggests that locally spun thread had become less desirable (Kusimba 1997: 510–11; Horton 2004). More prestigious cloth and clothing options, by that time, were imported cottons and silks particularly from India; they were worn in that form, but also became raw materials for an expanded Swahili weaving industry.

p.327



[*Figure 31.2*](#) Spindle whorls from Chwaka, made on sherds of imported pottery

We have Jeremy Prestholdt to thank for an important essay on Swahili cloth and clothing. The cloth market, he states, ‘integrated local and regional marketplaces, merchants, menial labourers, and rulers alike in a cohesive and distinct material sphere’ (1998: 10). Textiles were ultimately produced in many coastal towns: major centres included Mogadishu, Pate, Kilwa, Sofala and the Kirimba Islands and nearby mainland in Mozambique. Based on accounts from Ibn Battuta and later sources, Mogadishu was exporting cotton cloth to the Persian Gulf and Egypt prior to the sixteenth century (Prestholdt 1998: 24), and was still a heavy producer of cotton cloth woven from imported Indian thread in the nineteenth century (Brown 1988). Pate was the locale producing the most prestigious cloth for coastal consumption. Weavers there took apart imported silk fabrics from India and China and reweave the thread into new, often striped, fabrics according to eastern African tastes, sometimes in patterned combinations with locally spun

or imported cotton; this was also happening in Sofala and other towns. This cut down manufacturing time at the local level, allowing for special-order production to meet multiple markets. Although most coastal thread was white, indigo dye was produced on the coast, notably near Milwani in the Kirimba Islands, and then the coloured thread exported to weavers nearby to create fabrics for Portuguese, Swahili and elite clients inland. In other coastal regions, imported indigo cotton cloth was taken apart and rewoven in combination with local undyed cotton thread. A tiny square of indigo-dyed cotton cloth was found in 1984 in association with the eleventh-century Mtambwe coin hoard on Pemba (Horton *et al.* 1986); Horton (2004) suggests it is a likely Indian import, but could have been made locally (Horton, in press; LaViolette, this volume).

The abundant historical evidence from the Portuguese period is enticing to project backwards into earlier centuries, but we need to do so cautiously; we might use it to inspire questions about those earlier centuries when the cloth industry emerged out of village- and early town-based production. It may be that cotton-spinning and weaving both began at the household level, with spinning as a part-time activity done widely (by women?), and weaving a more specialised female and/or male activity (it became a male activity later on; Kusimba 1996), perhaps eventually in a lineage-based organisation of production. As the scale of production increased, the number of people involved in both may have motivated a shift to full-time commitment by many more people, though perhaps still taking place in households. As what seems one of the most important coastal industries from the early to mid-second millennium, when it was largely eclipsed by imports, cloth production may have been eventually under the centralised control of powerful families, as many kinds of production came to be in more recent centuries (Brown 1988; Kusimba *et al.* 2013).

p.328

Coinage

Coin-making on the coast dates from the late eighth century CE (Brown 1993), with the earliest examples to date – tiny silver coins bearing a ruler's name and short attestation, weighing from 0.1–0.3 g each – found at Shanga (Horton 2004; Pallaver, this volume). These are the earliest minted coins in Africa south of Aksum (Perkins 2014). The c. 15,000 coins that have been excavated from coastal sites (they ceased being made in the early sixteenth century) have inspired considerable scholarly research into the intertwined economic, political, religious and symbolic roles they played in Swahili life (for example, Horton *et al.* 1986; Brown 1992, 1993; Perkins 2014, 2015; Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2012). Wynne-Jones and Fleisher (2012: 21) have argued for their use well beyond the commercial realm, as symbols of local authority; some coins with perforations may have been used decoratively and/or symbolically, sewn on clothing (p. 34). In terms of their original usage in Swahili practice, Perkins (2015) argues for coastal coin-makers (in

service of local rulers) drawing inspiration from the Indian Ocean world, but not modelling Swahili coins on specific foreign examples. Swahili coins were indeed unlike contemporary ones in circulation, with the names of individuals (rulers?) and rhyming couplets praising the person and Allah in Arabic (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2012); they bore no caliph's name, mint or date, all typical on Islamic coinage in wide circulation at the time (Perkins 2015). The local coins do not seem to have left the coast; they are found at many sites, but in large clusters at a few, such as at Kilwa Kisiwani and nearby Songo Mnara (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2012), in smaller numbers elsewhere, and certainly not at all Swahili sites, even urban ones. The greatest concentration is from Kilwa itself, with some 13,000 recovered (Chittick 1974; Perkins 2015).

Because of their uniquely local qualities, no one questions that Swahili coins were minted on the coast, despite the lack of recovery of production debris to date (crucibles for melting metal and copper slag have been recovered but they are not necessarily associated with coin-making; Harding 1960; Chittick 1974). Perkins' (2014, 2015) XRF analysis of the coins from Songo Mnara, which allows for non-invasive compositional analysis of the metal, showed that the coins fell into two groups, with some changes within each group associated with specific rulers. He tentatively suggests two minting periods separated by a century, and continued use of the earlier coins.

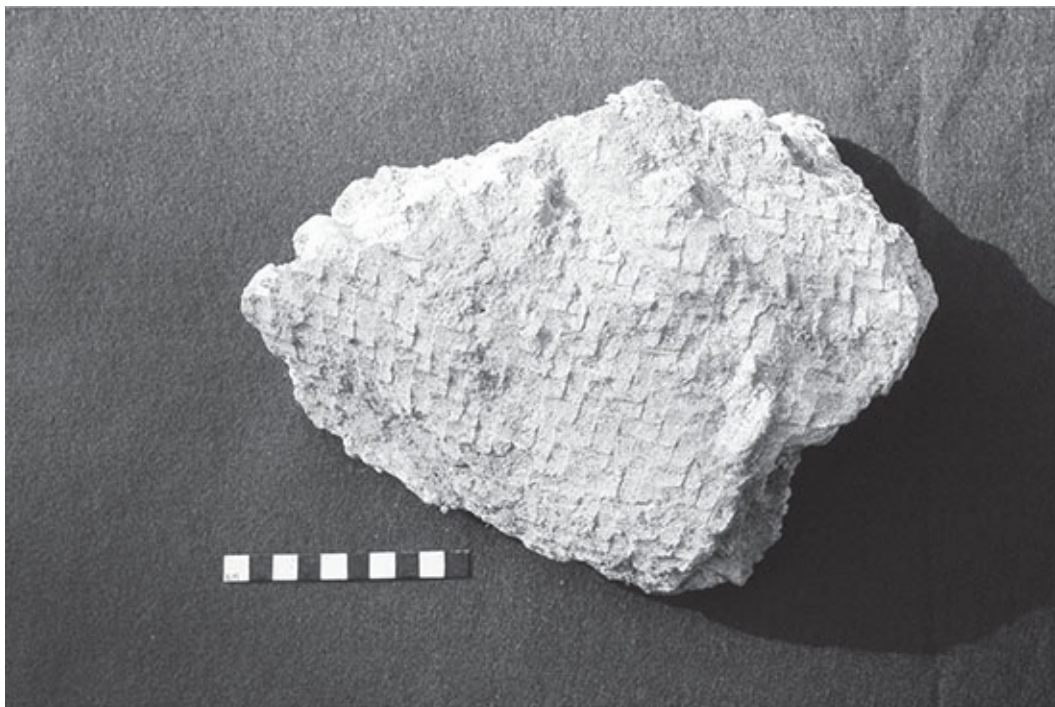
Swahili coins were die-struck using a method known also from the Yemen, according to Horton (2004), and with closest correlates found archaeologically in Sindh. Discerning their origins is important, though it is their local life histories, from production to deposition, that beg the most interesting questions.

Even without concrete production information, I bring coins into this discussion of Swahili craft and industry because, perhaps more than any other kind of production on the coast, coin-making must have been a kind of attached production, probably from the ninth-century beginnings but certainly soon after. Utilising silver, copper and even gold in some cases, likely procured from serious distances, invoking the names of ruling elites, requiring Arabic literacy, in production only in certain places on the coast (concentrated at Kilwa), there are palpable connections to localised, if not centralised, control. At the same time, they were not under the control of the central caliphates of the times (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2012), though gold dinars have also been recovered from Swahili contexts. Coin production was scalable, but the challenges of scaling it were entirely different from that of shell beads (with which the earliest coins were contemporary), or iron or cloth. For our purposes, then, they draw attention to a kind of rarefied production that spans more than seven centuries, and increases in momentum and perhaps in control as hierarchies became more and more rigid, but does not appear to undergo radical transformations as a production system.

Other medieval and later craft and industry

For the period 1000–1500 CE, while Swahili society was reorganising itself around stonetowns, there was undoubtedly a great variety of local production taking place. There is no need to repeat all the kinds of production we know or can intuit were taking place in earlier centuries that likely continued into these later ones. We know that a burst of building in coral rag replaced reliance on *Porites* coral for the bulk of the ‘stone’ houses in towns, and that all the steps that went into quarrying and dressing coral rag, preparing mortar and plaster ([Figure 31.3](#)), and preparing *Porites* for decorative elements took skilled labour and architectural vision. Pottery production diversified after 1000 CE, with numerous regional styles developing; it is quite possible that the social organisation of production did not change dramatically even though the social and stylistic frames of reference did (Croucher and Wynne-Jones 2006; Wynne-Jones and Mapunda 2008).

In terms of a new craft from this period, Aryn Neurock (2015) carried out an ambitious study of aragonite (giant clam) bead production based on finds from Songo Mnara. These beads were also found, along with manufacturing debris, at Kilwa (Chittick 1974 II: 476–488), and one was found at Manda (Chittick 1984: 186). She was able to reconstruct the (perhaps attached) specialisation process, beginning with divers who brought the enormous shellfish to shore, and the many steps of bead production, working with hard material as much as *c.* 3.5 cm thick (Neurock 2015: 56). Other jewellery was certainly being produced by craft specialists, mostly in metal; in addition to what has been mentioned above, there is evidence for rock crystal long being worked into beads and other items for local consumption and mostly export (Horton 1987).



[Figure 31.3](#) Plaster impression of woven mat or basket, Pujini (Pemba Island)

As a final point, Howard Brown's (1988) study of Siyu as an exuberant centre of Swahili craft production in the eighteenth–nineteenth centuries can be a source of inspiration to develop questions about earlier craft and industry. Siyu brings to our attention many less visible kinds of production not yet mentioned, that might have echoes in earlier centuries. These might well include wooden furniture; leather cushions, buckets, book covers and footwear; embroidery; brass-work; swords and knives; and hand-copied books in locally made ink, on local and imported paper.

The challenges of studying Swahili production

By way of conclusion, I offer a short discussion of why our understanding of Swahili craft and industry might remain so incomplete, and steps we could take to improve the situation. I suggest several reasons for the incompleteness: possible empirical ones, having to do with the archaeological record itself; and traditions and practices within coastal archaeology that have compounded the issue.

The craft and industry featured in this chapter – iron, shell beads, cloth and coins – have as a common denominator that even in the context of poor preservation in coastal soils, there are indicators of production that have endured. Slag, grooved potsherds, spindle whorls and coins themselves are common finds for their periods of use that show up in agricultural fields, middens and house deposits, producing large enough sample sizes to inspire in-depth study. We do not typically find features we identify as workshops, although at some sites we have: for example, the timber kiosks at Shanga that have been interpreted as such (Horton 2004), the concentration of iron-smithing debris at Unguja Ukuu in a household context (Juma, this volume), and the magnetic anomaly at Vumba Kuu that may also be a forge (Wynne-Jones 2012). Many crafts do not require formal workshop settings, but metalsmithing usually does. Of the mainstay crafts or industries, (coral) architecture and pottery have excellent potential for greater examination in terms of their social organisation of production. Neither of them, however, are necessarily workshop-based activities, although features such as lime-making kilns, plaster-mixing pits and pottery firing spots leave long-lasting debris (see Ichumbaki and Pollard 2015 for a discussion of plaster and mortar production and use in relation to potsherds). So many of the quotidian craft activities that have been mentioned above – plaiting and weaving the ever-present mats and baskets, rope and string making, leather tanning – might be discernible through microstratigraphic and phytolith studies in and around households (Sulas and Madella 2012), and in pit features, such as those at Mtambwe Mkuu, which Horton suggested may have been for dyeing or tanning. At a number of settlements – including Shanga, Mtambwe Mkuu and Vumba Kuu – excavators have suggested some craft-based specialist quarters (Wynne-Jones 2012; Horton in press), or at least households,

that might indicate some production in the service and under the control of elites. So far, there is no evidence for craft producers' social isolation in precolonial Swahili settlements. For the most part, much of the craft production carried out may have been dispersed, in households, and elusive in terms of final product and manufacturing evidence. Importantly, since it is the towns that have received the most archaeological attention, early villages, and villages outside the later, larger centres, could well be locations of craft production, and it is only as we increase attention to those (and the non-stone sectors of towns) that we will know their role in production. These are archaeological challenges, but ones that have been transcended in many other parts of the world.

p.331

Intense scholarly interest in long-distance trade interactions with Indian Ocean and other far-flung communities, and the central role of prestigious and symbolically laden imports in coastal culture and society, may have helped overshadow the role of more local craft and industry in Swahili life. Equally, the long-standing interest in elites has tipped our research away from the commoners and the quotidian (Fleisher and LaViolette 1999), but this is certainly in the process of shifting. As we research areas of major settlements away from the stone-built centres, to seek out the internal differentiation in the towns (Koplin and LaViolette 2008; Wynne-Jones 2016: 108), the more likely we are to address this particular 'erasure' (Schmidt and Walz 2010) in the archaeology of the Swahili.

References

- Aldrick, J. 1990. 'The nineteenth-century carved wooden doors of the East African coast'. *Azania* 25: 1–18.
- Allen, J. de V. 1974. 'Swahili architecture in the later Middle Ages'. *African Arts* 7 (2): 42–84.
- Allen, J. de V. 1989. 'The *kiti cha enzi* and other Swahili chairs'. *African Arts* 22 (3): 54–62.
- Arnold, J. F. and Munn, A. 1994. 'Independent or attached specialization: the organization of shell bead production in California'. *Journal of Field Archaeology* 21: 473–89.
- Bisson, M. S., Childs, S. T., De Barros, P., Holl, A. F. C. and Vogel, J. O. 2002. *Ancient African Archaeology: The Sociocultural Context*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira.
- Brown, H. 1988. 'Siyu: town of the craftsmen'. *Azania* 23: 101–13.
- Brown, H. W. 1992. 'Early Muslim coinage in East Africa: the evidence from Shanga'. *Numismatic Chronicle* 152: 83–7.
- Brown, H. W. 1993. 'Coins of East Africa: an introductory survey'. *Yarmouk Numismatics*, 5: 9–16.
- Casson, L. 1989. *The Periplus Maris Erythraei: Text with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Chami, F. A. 1992. 'Limbo: early iron-working in south-eastern Tanzania'. *Azania* 27: 45–52.
- Chami, F. A. 1994. *The Tanzanian Coast in the First Millennium ad: An Archaeology of the Iron-Working, Farming Communities*. Studies in the African Past 7. Uppsala: Societa Archaeologica Upsaliensis.
- Chami, F. A. 1998. 'A review of Swahili archaeology'. *African Archaeological Review* 15 (3): 199–218.
- Chittick, N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*, 2 Vols. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Chittick, N. 1984. *Manda: Excavations at an Island Port on the Kenya Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Costin, C. L. 1996. 'Exploring the relationship among craft production, gender, and complex societies: methodological and theoretical issues of gender attribution'. In *Gender and Archaeology*, edited by R. Wright, 111–142. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Costin, C. L. 2001. 'Craft production systems'. In *Archaeology at the Millennium: A Sourcebook*, edited by G. Feinman and T. Price, 273–327. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum.
- Croucher, S. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2006. 'People, not pots: locally produced ceramics and identity on the nineteenth-century East African coast'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 39 (1): 107–24.
- Crowther, A., Faulkner, P., Prendergast, M. E., Quintana Morales, E. M., Horton, M., Wilmsen, E., *et al.* 2016. 'Coastal subsistence, maritime trade, and the colonization of small offshore islands in eastern African prehistory'. *Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology* 11 (2): 211–37, doi:10.1080/15564894.2016.1188334.
- Fawcett, W. B. and LaViolette, A. 1990. 'Iron Age settlement around Mkiu, south-eastern Tanzania'. *Azania* 25: 19–26.
- Flannery, K. V. and Winter, M. C. 1976. 'Analyzing household activities'. In *The Early Mesoamerican Village*, edited by K. V. Flannery, 34–49. New York: Academic Press.
- Fleisher, J. 2004. 'Behind the Sultan of Kilwa's "rebellious conduct": local perspectives on an international East African town'. In *African Historical Archaeologies*, edited by A. M. Reid and P. J. Lane, 91–123. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum.
- Fleisher, J. 2008. 'Daily practice in early East African coastal houses: two burned 8th–10th-century houses from Pemba Island, Tanzania'. Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society of Africanist Archaeologists, Frankfurt.
- Fleisher, J. and LaViolette, A. 1999. 'Elusive wattle and daub: finding the hidden majority in the archaeology of the Swahili'. *Azania* 34: 87–108.

- Fleisher, J. and LaViolette, A. 2013. 'The early Swahili trade village of Tumbe, Pemba Island, Tanzania, ad 600–950'. *Antiquity* 87 (338): 1151–68.
- Fleisher, J. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2011. 'Ceramics and the early Swahili: deconstructing the Early Tana Tradition'. *African Archaeological Review* 28 (4): 245–78.
- Flexner, J., Fleisher, J. and LaViolette, A. 2008. 'Bead grinders and early Swahili household economy: analysis of an assemblage from Tumbe, Pemba Island, Tanzania, 7th–10th centuries AD'. *Journal of African Archaeology* 6 (2): 161–81.
- Garlake, P. S. 1966. *The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Hagstrum, M. 2001. 'Household production in Chaco Canyon society'. *American Antiquity* 66: 47–55.
- Håland, R. 2005. 'New perspectives on the technology and socio-cultural context of iron working at Dakawa'. In *Salvaging Tanzania's Cultural Heritage*, edited by B. B. B. Mapunda and P. Msemwa, 190–7. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press.
- Håland, R. and Msuya, C. S. 2000. 'Pottery production, iron working, and trade in the Early Iron Age: the case of Dakawa, east-central Tanzania'. *Azania* 35: 75–106.
- Harding, J. R. 1960. 'On some crucibles and associated finds from the coast of Tanganyika'. *Man* 60: 136–9.
- Horton, M. 1984. 'The early settlement of the northern Swahili coast'. PhD diss., University of Cambridge.
- Horton, M. 1987. 'The Swahili corridor'. *Scientific American* 256 (3): 86–93.
- Horton, M. 1994. 'Closing the corridor: archaeological and architectural evidence for emerging Swahili regional autonomy'. In *Continuity and Autonomy in Swahili Communities: Inland Influences and Strategies of Self-Determination*, edited by D. Parkin, 15–21. London: School of Oriental and African Studies.
- Horton, M. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. 2004. 'Artisans, communities, and commodities: medieval exchanges between northwest India and East Africa'. *Ars Orientalis* 34: 62–80.
- Horton M. C. in press. *Zanzibar and Pemba: The Archaeology of an Indian Ocean Archipelago*. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. C. and Blurton, T. R. 1988. "'Indian" metalwork in East Africa: the bronze lion statuette from Shanga'. *Antiquity* 62 (234): 11–23.
- Horton, M. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili*. London: Blackwell.
- Horton, M. C., Brown, H. M. and Oddy, W. A. 1986. 'The Mtambwe hoard'. *Azania* 21: 15–23.
- Hruby, Z. H., Flad, R. K., Clark, J. E., Inomata, T. and Miller, H. M.-L. 2007. 'On "rethinking" craft specialization: responses by the authors'. In *Rethinking Craft*

- Specialization in Complex Societies: Archaeological Analyses of the Social Meaning of Production*, edited by Z. H. Hruby and R. K. Flad, 181–92. Berkeley: University of California.
- Ichumbaki, E. B. and Pollard, E. 2015. ‘Potsherds coated with lime mortar along the East African coast: their origin and significance’. *African Archaeological Review* 32 (3): 443–63.
- Iles, L. and Lyaya, E. 2015. ‘Making metals in East Africa and beyond: archaeometallurgy in Azania’. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 50 (4): 481–94.
- Killick, D. 2004. ‘What do we know about African iron working?’ *Journal of African Archaeology* 2 (1): 97–112.
- Killick, D. 2009. ‘Agency, dependency, and long-distance trade: East Africa and the Islamic world’. In *Politics and Power: Archaeological Perspectives on the Landscapes of Early States*, edited by S. E. Falconer and C. L. Redman, 179–207. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Kiriama, H. 1990. ‘The iron-using communities of southern Kenya and north-eastern Tanzania c. 0–15th century AD’. PhD diss., Cambridge University.
- Klein-Arendt, R. 2000. ‘The iron crafts of the Swahili from the perspective of historical semantics’. In *Swahili Forum* 7, edited by R. Beck, L. Diegner, T. Geider and G. Graebner, 153–204. Cologne: Institut für Afrikanistik.
- Koplin, L. and LaViolette, A. 2008. ‘Archaeology of Swahili social differentiation: excavation of earth-and-thatch neighborhoods at Gede, Kenya, 11th–16th centuries AD’. Report submitted to the National Museums of Kenya.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1993. ‘The archaeology and ethnography of iron metallurgy on the Kenya coast’. PhD diss., Bryn Mawr College.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1996. ‘The social context of iron forging on the Kenya coast’. *Africa* 66 (3): 386–410.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1997. ‘The archaeology of the Swahili’. In *Encyclopedia of Precolonial Africa*, edited by J. O. Vogel, 507–13. Walnut Creek: AltaMira.
- Kusimba, C. M. 2009. ‘Landscape at two scales: economy and trade in East Africa’. In *Politics and Power: Archaeological Perspectives on the Landscapes of Early States*, edited by S. E. Falconer and C. L. Redman, 163–78. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Kusimba, C. M. and Killick, D. 2003. ‘Ironworking on the Swahili coast of Kenya’. In *East African Archaeology: Foragers, Potters, Smiths, and Traders*, edited by C. Kusimba and S. Kusimba, 99–116. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.
- Kusimba, C. and Kusimba, S. 2003. *East African Archaeology: Foragers, Potters, Smiths, and Traders*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Kusimba, C. M., Killick, D. J. and Cresswell, R. G. 1994. ‘Indigenous and imported metals in Swahili sites on the Kenyan coast’. In *Society, Culture and Technology in Africa*,

- edited by S. T. Childs, 63–77. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum. MASCA Research Papers in Science and Archaeology, suppl. to Vol. 11.
- Kusimba, C. M., Kusimba, S. B. and Dussubieux, L. 2013. 'Beyond the coastalscapes: preindustrial social and political networks in East Africa'. *African Archaeological Review* 30 (4): 399–426.
- Lambourn, E. 1999. 'The decoration of the Fakhr al-Dīn mosque in Mogadishu and other pieces of Gujarati marble carving on the East African coast'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 34 (1): 61–86.
- LaViolette, A. 2000. *Ethno-archaeology in Jenné, Mali: Craft and Status among Smiths, Potters and Masons*. Oxford: Cambridge Monographs in African Archaeology 49, British Archaeological Reports International Series 838.
- LaViolette, A. 2002. 'Encountering archaeology in Tanzania: education, development, and dialogue at the University of Dar es Salaam'. *Anthropological Quarterly* 75 (2): 355–74.
- Lindahl, A. 1994. 'Microscopic analysis'. In *The Tanzanian Coast in the First Millennium ad*, by F. Chami, 83–9. Studies in the African Past 7. Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis.
- Mapunda, B. B. B. 1995. 'An archaeological view of the history and variation of iron working in southwestern Tanzania'. PhD diss., University of Florida.
- Mapunda, B. B. B. 2000. 'Ironworking'. *Journal of African History* 41 (3): 487–529.
- Mapunda, B. B. B. 2002. 'Iron metallurgy along the Tanzanian coast'. In *Southern Africa and the Swahili World*, edited by F. Chami and G. Pwiti, 76–88. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press.
- Mapunda, B. B. B. 2010. *Contemplating the Fipa Iron Working*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers.
- McIntosh, R. J. 1991. 'Early urban clusters in China and Africa: the arbitration of social ambiguity'. *Journal of Field Archaeology* 18: 199–212.
- McIntosh, R. J. 2005. *Ancient Middle Niger: Urbanism and the Self-Organizing Landscape*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Meier, S. P. 2016. *Swahili Port Cities: The Architecture of Elsewhere*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- M'Mbogori, F. N. 2015. *Population and Ceramic Traditions: Revisiting the Tana Ware of Coastal Kenya (7th–14th Century ad)*. Cambridge Monographs in African Archaeology 89. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Neurock, A. 2015. 'Aragonite bead production at Songo Mnara'. BA thesis, Rice University.
- Perkins, J. 2014. 'The coins of the Swahili coast c. 800–1500'. PhD diss., University of Bristol.
- Perkins, J. 2015. 'The Indian Ocean and Swahili coast coins, international networks and local developments'. *Afriques*, 6. Available online at: <http://afriques.revues.org/1769>.

- Prestholdt, J. G. 1998. *As Artistry Permits and Custom May Ordain: The Social Fabric of Material Consumption in the Swahili World, circa 1450–1600*. Working Papers of the Program of African Studies, Northwestern University, Volume 3.
- Schmidt, P. R. 1978. *Historical Archaeology: A Structural Approach in an African Culture*. Westport: Greenwood Press.
- Schmidt, P. R. 1997. *Iron Technology in East Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Schmidt, P. R. 1998. 'Reading gender in ancient African iron technology'. In *Gender in African Prehistory*, edited by S. Kent, 139–62. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- Schmidt, P. R. and Walz, J. 2010. 'Re-representing African pasts through historical archaeology'. In *Contemporary Archaeology in Theory: The New Pragmatism* (2nd Ed.), edited by R. Preucel and S. Mrozowski, 404–22. London: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Schmidt, P., Karoma, N. J., LaViolette, A., Fawcett, W. B., Mabulla, A. Z., Rutabanzibwa, L. N. and Saanane, C. M. 1992. *Archaeological Investigations in the Vicinity of Mkiu, Kisaraawe District, Tanzania*. Dar es Salaam: Archaeological Contributions of the University of Dar es Salaam, Occasional Paper No. 1.
- p.334
- Sinopoli, C. 2011. *The Political Economy of Craft Production*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stark, M. T. 2003. 'Current issues in ceramic ethnoarchaeology'. *Journal of Archaeological Research* 11 (3): 193–242.
- Sulas, F. and Madella, M. 2012. 'Archaeology at the micro-scale: micromorphology and phytoliths at a Swahili stonetown'. *Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences* 4 (2): 145–59.
- Villiers, A. [1940] 2006. *Sons of Sindbad*. London: Arabian Publishing.
- Walshaw, S. 2010. 'Converting to rice: urbanization, Islamization and crops on Pemba Island, Tanzania, AD 700–1500'. *World Archaeology* 42 (1): 137–54.
- Walz, J. R. 2010. 'Route to a regional past: an archaeology of the lower Pangani (Ruvu) Basin, Tanzania, 500–1900 CE'. PhD diss., University of Florida.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2012. 'Exploring the use of geophysical survey on the Swahili coast: Vumba Kuu, Kenya'. *Azania* 47 (2): 137–52.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2016. *A Material Culture: Consumption and Materiality on the Coast of Precolonial East Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wynne-Jones, S. and Fleisher, J. 2010. 'Archaeological investigations at Songo Mnara, Tanzania, 2009'. *Nyame Akuma* 73: 2–8.
- Wynne-Jones, S. and Fleisher, J. 2012. 'Coins in context: local economy, value and practice on the East African Swahili coast'. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 22: 19–36.
- Wynne-Jones, S. and Fleisher, J. 2013. 'Ceramics and society: Early Tana Tradition and the Swahili coast (data paper)'. *Internet Archaeology*, 35. Council for British Archaeology,

<http://dx.doi.org/10.11141/ia.35.7>.

- Wynne-Jones, S. and Fleisher, J. 2016. 'Coins and other currencies on the Swahili coast'. In *The Archaeology of Money*, edited by C. Haselgrove and Stefan Krmnicek, 115–36. Leicester: Leicester University Press.
- Wynne-Jones, S. and Mapunda, B. B. B. 2008. ““This is what pots look like here”: pots, practice and tradition in the Mafia Archipelago’. *Azania* 43: 1–17

32

ANIMALS AND THEIR USES IN THE SWAHILI WORLD

Eréndira M. Quintana Morales and Mary E. Prendergast

Introduction

Past populations inhabiting the Swahili coast – an area stretching from southern Somalia to Mozambique and including offshore islands, the Comoros and Madagascar – encountered a rich and diverse set of animals, many of which were incorporated into their social realm in various forms and can be traced in the archaeological record. Early research on the Swahili coast often neglected faunal remains, focusing instead on material culture, texts and trade locales. However, recent studies demonstrate the power of zooarchaeological data to address key issues in Swahili social organisation, daily practice and ritual life. These show that past coastal and island populations had diverse economic strategies including shellfish gathering, fishing, hunting and animal husbandry, with interactions between foragers and food producers being a common feature of coast and hinterland life. Animals entered the domestic and public spheres as part of daily meals and feasting events, but also as raw materials such as bone, shell and coral transformed into architectural and ornamental items. The exchange of animals and their products connected the Swahili world to mainland Africa and the Indian Ocean sphere, and thus zooarchaeology is key to addressing the questions of trade that dominated early Swahili research. In this chapter we describe the great biodiversity of the Swahili coast, hinterland and islands, we explore diachronic changes in animal uses from the Later Stone Age (LSA) through the medieval era, and we address key themes in Swahili world zooarchaeology.

Environmental background

The Swahili world encompasses many habitats, divisible into zones: the mainland coast and

hinterland; offshore islands (Lamu, Zanzibar, Mafia and Kilwa archipelagos); the oceanic Comoros islands; and Madagascar. In all of these, landscapes have been transformed by centuries or millennia of anthropogenic habitat modification and species translocations. Unfortunately, a lack of palaeoecological studies (but see Punwong 2013) means that past vegetational patterns are inferred from zooarchaeological and, rarely, palaeobotanical remains.

Moving down the coast and its hinterland, one sees a dramatic shift from arid southern Somalia and northern Kenya to more humid conditions in southern Kenya and Tanzania, with a return to slightly more arid conditions from Kilwa to Mozambique. Rivers intersect the coast creating fertile deltas, notably the Tana, Rufuji, Sabaki and Zambezi. The Zanzibar-Inhambane vegetational mosaic, which characterises the Swahili coast, includes mangroves, swamps, thickets and woodlands, all with significant human modification (Burgess and Clarke 2000). Wild mammals are diverse ([Figure 32.1](#)), and livestock graze in much of the coastal plain.

p.336

By contrast, many offshore islands are relatively barren, with thin soils overlying coral rag. These soils support scrub or thicket, with substantial forest only on Unguja, the largest island in the Zanzibar archipelago. Most islands support browsing goats (*Capra hircus*), while grazing sheep (*Ovis aries*) and cattle (today, mostly crossbreeds of *Bos taurus* and *Bos indicus*) are found mainly on Pemba, which has more abundant grass. Wild fauna tend to be depauperate and small-bodied compared with the mainland (Walsh 2007), with suni and duikers being the main game animals; no island animals are larger than bushpig and leopard, both found only on Unguja. Terrestrial fauna are even less diverse on the distant Comoros islands. Many Comorian taxa were introduced from Madagascar (Walsh 2007), which has unique endemic flora and fauna. In both the Comoros and Madagascar, tenrecs, lemurs, land tortoise and various birds are common, though livestock and marine resources dominate the archaeological sites.

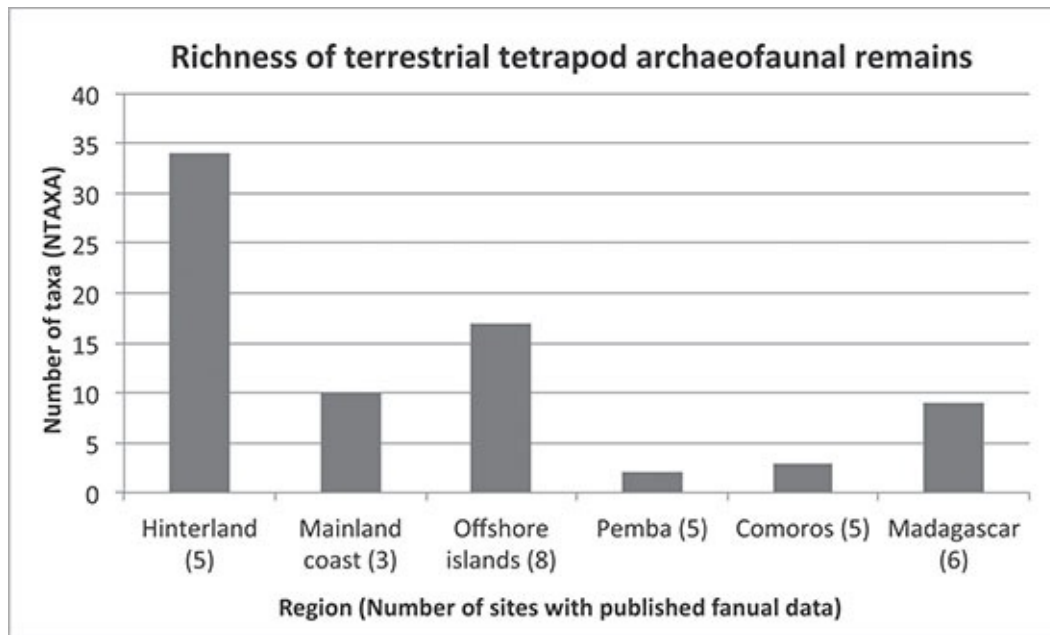


Figure 32.1 Species richness (number of taxa, NTAXA) for tetrapod fauna reported from Swahili sites from EIA to medieval period, by region. Avian and marine taxa are excluded. Richness may be biased by the number of sites studied and the sample size at each site

Although terrestrial biodiversity thus varies widely, the Swahili world boasts tremendous marine life. Coral reefs protect inshore seagrass beds, mud flats and mangrove forests, with the largest mangrove expanses in western Madagascar and mainland eastern Africa (Richmond 2011). Reefs fringe the mainland coastlines and are well developed around many of the offshore and oceanic islands (Spalding *et al.* 2001). The intertidal zone is rich with invertebrates, including bivalves and gastropods, such as nerites inhabiting rocky shores, ark clams in sandy mudflats and mangrove whelks. Reef-associated fish (for example, emperors, groupers, parrotfish, jacks) are abundant at both mainland and island sites, underscoring the importance of coral reef resources. Estuary fish, such as mullets, are more frequent in the coastal mainland. Requiem sharks, typically large, fast-swimming predators that visit the reefs, are found in some archaeological sites. Marine mammals are also occasionally recovered, including dugong, which inhabits shallow coastal waters, and the farther-ranging bottlenose dolphin and pygmy sperm whale. More abundant are the remains of sea turtle, which may have been exploited not only for meat, but also for oil, leather or ‘tortoiseshell’.

Sources of information

A longstanding focus on material culture and identification of trade locales means that

zooarchaeological data have, until recently, been overlooked in coastal research agendas. As such, subsistence interpretations come mainly from taxonomic lists, often appended to site reports ([Table 32.1](#)). These lists vary in their comprehensiveness, quantification methods and use of scientific names. Samples and reference collections are not always described and illustrations are rare. These limitations make it difficult to resolve some of the questions raised below.

Faunal remains have usually been recovered via dry-sieving, commonly with 5 mm mesh that may be inadequate to recover microfauna and some fish remains; however, flotation and/or finer screens have been employed particularly in more recent excavations. There is much scope to improve taphonomic studies, as currently available reports reveal little of site formation processes and culinary practice, which might be inferred from studies of skeletal representation, breakage patterns, and bone surface modifications. Preservation varies widely, with few fauna in the lateritic soils of many Early Iron Age (EIA) sites, complex taphonomic processes in caves, and good preservation in later urban sites. Such differences must be considered when comparing data across sites. Furthermore, non-dietary uses of animals are rarely considered.

Despite these challenges, some reports are available that address not only taxonomic distribution and intrasite differences, but also implications for subsistence strategies, citing relevant ethnographic and ethnological data (Mudida and Horton in press; Mudida and Horton 1996). Indeed, there are a number of ethnographic and ethnohistoric documents on fishing (Grottanelli 1955; Prins 1965), and on foraging practices (reviewed by Walsh 2007), which offer useful interpretive frameworks. Additional information on animals in the Swahili world comes from linguistic data (Blench 2006; Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993), and historical sources ranging from the first-century CE *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (Casson 1989) to the fourteenth-century accounts of Ibn Battuta (Freeman-Grenville 1962; Hamdun and King 1998). While the extent to which these distinct lines of evidence coincide with the archaeological record has been extensively discussed (for example, Horton and Middleton 2000), until recently faunal data were largely absent from the debate (Boivin *et al.* 2013). Also recently, shifts in culinary practices such as those demonstrated by Walshaw (2010) for crops, have been considered for animal foods (Boivin *et al.* 2014; Fleisher *et al.* 2015). Faunal data thus are becoming an important source for understanding daily practice and social organisation, as well as geographic and diachronic variation in subsistence.

Diachronic change in subsistence strategies and animal uses

Later Stone Age and Early Iron Age coastal adaptations

Coastal occupation began in the Late Pleistocene, with LSA sites documented on Unguja

– at that point still connected to the mainland – and the southern Kenyan hinterland (Chami 2009; Helm *et al.* 2012). Site occupants hunted diverse fauna typical of wooded and mixed environments. Rare fish remains at Kuumbi Cave on Unguja imply early but limited exploitation of offshore coral reefs (Chami 2009; Shipton *et al.* 2016). The appearance of domestic livestock as well as chicken (*Gallus gallus*), domestic dog (*Canis familiaris*), and possibly domestic cat (*Felis catus*), argued to date to the third to first millennia bce in some caves, is much debated, and recent research has challenged interpretations of ‘Neolithic’ contexts (Chami 2004, 2009; cf. Crowther *et al.* 2014; Prendergast *et al.* 2016; Shipton *et al.* 2016).

p.338

[Table 32.1](#) Published faunal data from Swahili sites

Approximate date	Site	Region	Reference	Collection method	Total NISP	
					Tetrapod	Fish
20kya-1st mil CE	Kuumbi Cave	Zanzibar	Chami 2009	NA	3793	(65)
17kya, 1st-2nd mil CE	Kuumbi Cave	Zanzibar	Shipton <i>et al.</i> in press	3 mm	6667	117
3000 BCE-1st mil CE	Machaga Cave	Zanzibar	Chami 2001	NA	670	(6)
1st mil CE	Mwanampambe Cave	Zanzibar	Chami 2009	NA	59	(2)
1st mil BCE	Ukunju Cave	Mafia Archipelago	Chami 2004	NA	13	(1)
7th-10th	Ukunju Cave	Mafia Archipelago	Crowther <i>et al.</i> 2014	3 mm/1 mm	22	20 (134)
EIA	Juani Primary School	Mafia Archipelago	Chami 2004	NA	82 (90)	12 (15)
4th-6th, 9th-12th	Juani Primary School	Mafia Archipelago	Crowther <i>et al.</i> in press	3 mm/1 mm	94	292
(1st mil BCE?), 7th/15th	Kinunda Cave	Mafia Archipelago	Chami 2004	NA	13	3 (14)
6th-8th	Fukuchani	Zanzibar	Mudida and Horton in press	5 mm	122	19 (1)
7th-10th	Unguja Ukuu	Zanzibar	Mudida and Horton in press	5 mm	254	380 (4)
7th/8th	Mpiji	Tanzania	Chami 1994	NA	465	130 (890)
7th/8th	Mgomani	Kenya hinterland	Helm 2000	4 mm	42	22
8th-12th, 15th-17th	Unguja Ukuu	Zanzibar	Juma 2004	3 mm	1287	(633)
8th-13th	Pate	Lamu Archipelago	Wilson and Omar 1997	NA	P	P
8th-15th	Shanga	Lamu Archipelago	Mudida and Horton 1996	5 mm	3000	5999
8th-18th	Chibuene	Mozambique	Badenhorst <i>et al.</i> 2011	NA	192	99 (812)
8th/9th	Koungou	Mayotte, Comoros	Allibert and Verin 1996	NA	P	14 (24)
8th/10th	Mreza	Kenya hinterland	Helm 2000	4 mm	74	4
8th/10th	Chombo	Kenya hinterland	Helm 2000	4 mm	721	9
9th-10th	Dembeni	Mayotte, Comoros	Wright <i>et al.</i> 1984	6 mm	101	10 (295)
9th-10th	Sima	Ndzuwani, Comoros	Wright <i>et al.</i> 1984	6 mm	21	13 (422)
9th-10th	Mbachile	Ngazidja, Comoros	Wright <i>et al.</i> 1984	6 mm	35	5 (195)
9th-11th	Bandarikuu	Pemba	Fleisher 2003	5 mm	1	108
9th-14th	Mtambwe Mkuu	Pemba	Mudida and Horton in press	5 mm	310	43 (15)
9th-16th	Ras Mkumbuu	Pemba	Mudida and Horton in press	5 mm	302	25 (5)

10th-11th	Dembeni	Mayotte, Comoros	Allibert <i>et al.</i> 1989	NA	417	(178)	11
10th-13th	Andaro	S Madagascar	Parker Pearson 2010	NA	176		
10th-14th	Manda	Lamu Archipelago	Chittick 1984	hand collected	P	P	P
10th-15th	Mahilaka	NW Madagascar	Radimilahy 1998	2 mm	515*	(56)*	68* (41)*
10th-16th/17th	Andranosoa	S Madagascar	Rakotozafy and Goodman 2005	NA	78	P	P
11th-13th	Talaky	S Madagascar	Parker Pearson 2010	1 mm		P	P
11th-15th	Sima	Nzwani, Comoros	Wright 1992	6 mm	306	41 (285)	P
11th-15th	Domoni	Nzwani, Comoros	Wright 1992	6 mm	210	19 (126)	P
11th-15th	Chwaka	Pemba	Fleisher 2003	5 mm	1370	568 (465)	(402)
12th	Kizimkazi	Zanzibar	Van Neer 2001	5 mm	331	1075 (1249)	7155
12th-14th	Amphijolike	S Madagascar	Parker Pearson 2010	5 mm	9906		
12th-14th	Tumbatu	Zanzibar	Mudida and Horton in press	5 mm	924	538 (4)	P
12th-14th	Chanswehela	Tanzania	Chami 1994	NA			88
12th/13th	Kaole Ruins	Tanzania	Chami 2002	NA	581	30 (2085)	P
13th-14th	Nosy Be	NW Madagascar	Dewar and Wright 1993	NA	P	P	P
13th-15th	Rezoky	S Madagascar	Rakotozafy and Goodman 2005	NA	127		
13th-15th	Mduuni	Pemba	Fleisher 2003	5 mm	100	44 (13)	
14th-15th	Kaliwa	Pemba	Fleisher 2003	5 mm	271	2011 (586)	769
14th-16th	Asambalahy	S Madagascar	Rakotozafy and Goodman 2005	NA	1		
14th-16th	Songo Mnara	Tanzania	Quintana Morales 2013	2 mm	304 (155)	3274	P
14th-16th	Vumba Kuu	Kenya	Quintana Morales 2013	5 mm	548 (251)	1194	P
14th-16th	Kua	Mafia Archipelago	Christie 2011	0.5-3 mm	844	184 (1846)	2227 (337)
14th/15th	Mtsengo	Kenya hinterland	Helm 2000	4 mm	1825	66	17
15th	Belo-sur-Mer	S Madagascar	Rakotozafy and Goodman 2005	NA	1	P	
15th/17th	Mbuyuni	Kenya hinterland	Helm 2000	4 mm	997	16	36
(EIA?) and 15th	Male Cave	Ngazidja, Comoros	Chami 2009	NA	18	(1)	(4)

* Data published as MNI; P=present but not quantified; Number in parentheses=count of unidentified remains within category

Clear evidence for domestic animals comes only at the end of the EIA in the sixth century CE, or later in the Middle Iron Age (MIA; seventh–tenth centuries CE), with earlier EIA sites plagued by poor preservation and/or dating problems. For example, at Kwale in southern Kenya no fauna were preserved (Soper 1967), while at nearby Mgombani, caprines, cattle and chicken are associated with EIA material culture but at a seventh-century date (Helm *et al.* 2012). While EIA sites have been documented along the Tanzanian coast and islands (for example, Chami 1994; Chami and Msemwa 1997), few report faunal remains, with the exception of Juani Primary School (Mafia), which shows the first clear evidence of extensive marine exploitation, but no unambiguous evidence of livestock (Chami 2004; Crowther *et al.* in press). Thus the arrival and nature of early herding on the coast and islands, and the relationships among food producers, foragers and the marine environment during the EIA, remain poorly understood. However, the implications are tremendous, given debate on Swahili origins and the influence of Southern Cushitic and Bantu language speakers on the coast, who are traditionally associated with pastoralist and farming economies, respectively (Helm 2000; Horton and Middleton 2000). Research on this topic is hampered by the persistence of divisions – even at contemporaneous sites – between ‘LSA foragers’ and ‘EIA agro-pastoralists’ that tend to conflate material culture, subsistence, and social and linguistic identities.

Another contested topic is the earliest occupation of Madagascar and Holocene-era extinctions of endemic taxa. Putative cut marks on bones of extinct hippopotamus and lemur date to the third and first millennia bce respectively, without associated archaeological finds (Gommery *et al.* 2011; Pérez *et al.* 2003). Recent arguments for a foraging occupation by 2000 bce, long before the arrival of MIA farmers in the mid-first millennium CE, are based primarily on lithic technology and associated OSL dates (Dewar *et al.* 2013). In the Comoros, lithic technology and EIA ceramics have been reported (Chami 2009), raising the possibility of a pre-MIA occupation. Further research will surely shed light on the timing and nature of early occupations in Madagascar and Comoros and the impacts on animal populations.

Subsistence strategies in early coastal towns during the Middle Iron Age (seventh to tenth centuries CE)

By the mid to late first-millennium, coastal and island towns stretching from Lamu to Mozambique – such as Manda, Shanga, Tumbe, Unguja Ukuu and Chibuene – are well established and show clear evidence for food production, as well as reliance on wild and marine resources ([Table 32.1](#)). In the Comoros, many ‘Dembeni Phase’ sites – Sima, Dembeni, M’Bachile and Koungou – similarly show a reliance on domestic and marine resources. Throughout the coast and islands, livestock are mainly caprines (when distinguished, usually goat), except on Pemba and Mayotte, where cattle dominate. However, there are some open-air MIA settlements that have very little evidence of herding, for example Fukuchani on Unguja (Mudida and Horton in press), and the

contemporaneous coastal and hinterland sites of Mpiji (Chami 1994) and Chombo and Mteza (Helm 2000). MIA-era cave deposits on Unguja and in the hinterland also have almost exclusively wild fauna (Chami 2009; Helm *et al.* 2012; Prendergast *et al.* 2016). Whether these assemblages represent foraging populations in contact with food producers and/or special-purpose sites used by food producers remains a topic for exploration.

At many late first-millennium coastal and island towns, such as Shanga, Mpiji, Chibuene, and Unguja Ukuu, fishing was a major economic activity. In the Comoros, the sites of Sima, M'bachile and Dembeni have large proportions of fish remains, many not identified to taxon. In fact, detailed taxonomic data on fish remains is sparse for this period, with most sites reporting samples of fewer than 100 identified fish remains. From the data available it is evident that during this period fishers targeted a wide range of inshore and especially reef-associated fish. Many of these coastal and island sites also have high numbers of sea turtle remains: while numbers may be inflated by fragmentation and distinctiveness of the carapace, this might also reflect the importance of turtle secondary products to a burgeoning trade economy. In contrast, small numbers of marine fish and shellfish at the contemporaneous site of Chombo in southern Kenya (Helm 2000) indicate that hinterland populations relied less heavily on marine resources.

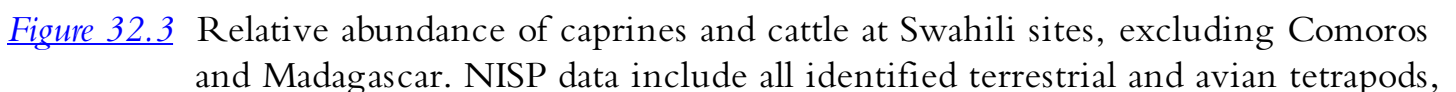
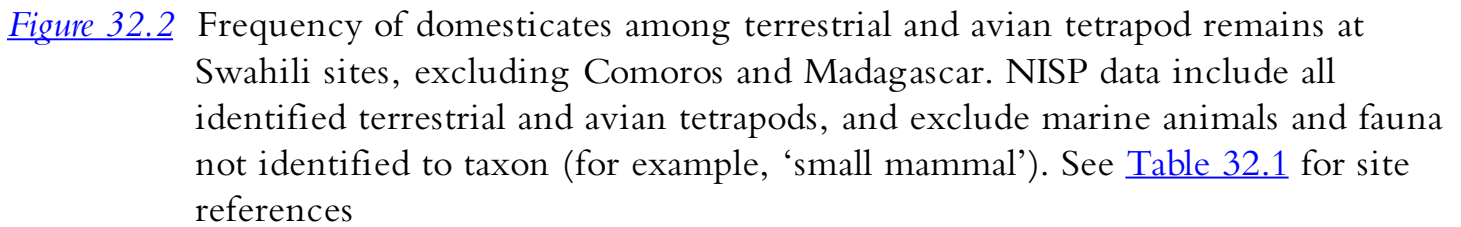
p.341

The presence of shellfish is noted at most sites, although invertebrates often remain unanalysed. However, large samples of identified marine bivalves and gastropods from the late first millennium at Mpiji, Pate and Shanga demonstrate the importance of shellfish gathering along the shore. At Pate, the mangrove whelk dominates the assemblage, as is the case at Mpiji, where these are only surpassed in number by crown conchs, found in sand and seagrass flats. At Shanga there are large numbers of sandy/seagrass-living *Strombus* shells and rocky/reef-dwelling *Murex* shells, although cowries dominate the sample. Interestingly, cowries are among the most common of the limited marine invertebrates reported at hinterland sites (Helm 2000; Walz 2010), and these are not known as good food resources, but rather may have had decorative or other symbolic value (see discussion below on non-dietary uses). The majority of shellfish species found at archaeological sites, nonetheless, are suitable for eating, although today they are regarded as a hardship food (Fleisher 2003; Msemwa 1994), and some species, such as the mangrove whelk, may also have served as fishing bait (Christie 2011; Radimilahy 1998).

Animals in the Swahili urban world (eleventh to fifteenth centuries CE)

The turn of the millennium saw a rise in large urban centres along the coastline, linked to other changes such as trade intensification, increased social stratification and a more intently maritime viewpoint, which become defining features of Swahili society. This social reorganisation has a visible impact on food choices and consumption practices, as recently discussed by Fleisher *et al.* (2015) and Boivin *et al.* (2014). On the coast and

offshore islands, evidence for hunting and trapping declines, with a majority of sites having only marine and domestic fauna ([Figure 32.2](#)); in the hinterland, wild resources remain significant but decline in relation to domestic ones (Helm 2000). Domesticates now include not only livestock, but also chicken, which is a typical household food in urban environments. Commensal species such as black rats (*Rattus rattus*), and the cats that likely pursued them, also appear in Swahili urban sites (for example, Badenhorst *et al.* 2011; Juma 2004; Mudida and Horton 1996). Among livestock, cattle increase in abundance in this period ([Figure 32.3](#)); however, this is primarily due to the presence of new sites in good grazing areas such as Pemba (Fleisher 2003; Mudida and Horton in press), rather than to changing preferences at formerly caprine-dominated sites (but see Helm 2000). In fact, we might speculate that Pemba was settled more intensively at this time precisely because its wetter climate allowed for better grazing. A focus on cattle could have been prompted by new social demands, including feasting, an issue discussed by Fleisher (2010) and Walshaw (2010) with respect to the use of large open bowls and increased rice consumption. Such increased demand might have been met by the introduction of zebu cattle, which together with local taurines produce crossbreeds that are able to thrive and produce milk on less water, and which are relatively disease-resistant (Marshall 1989). However, this remains conjectural in the absence of zooarchaeological or genetic data confirming the date of arrival of zebu. Vegetation clearance might also have led to better grazing for Unguja, and could be linked to the observed decline in consumption of forest-dwelling wild taxa; yet this too is speculative, given the paucity of local palaeoecological data. Finally, it is impossible on present data to examine changing ratios of sheep and goat; however, sheep were an important part of coastal social exchanges by the fifteenth century, according to Vasco de Gama (Freeman-Grenville 1962), and future research might trace this development back in time, perhaps using biomolecular techniques.



and exclude marine animals and fauna not identified to taxon (for example, ‘small mammal’). Where data could be separated by phase, the site appears multiple times; this applies to Chibuene, Shanga and Unguja Ukuu. See [Table 32.1](#) for site references

p.343

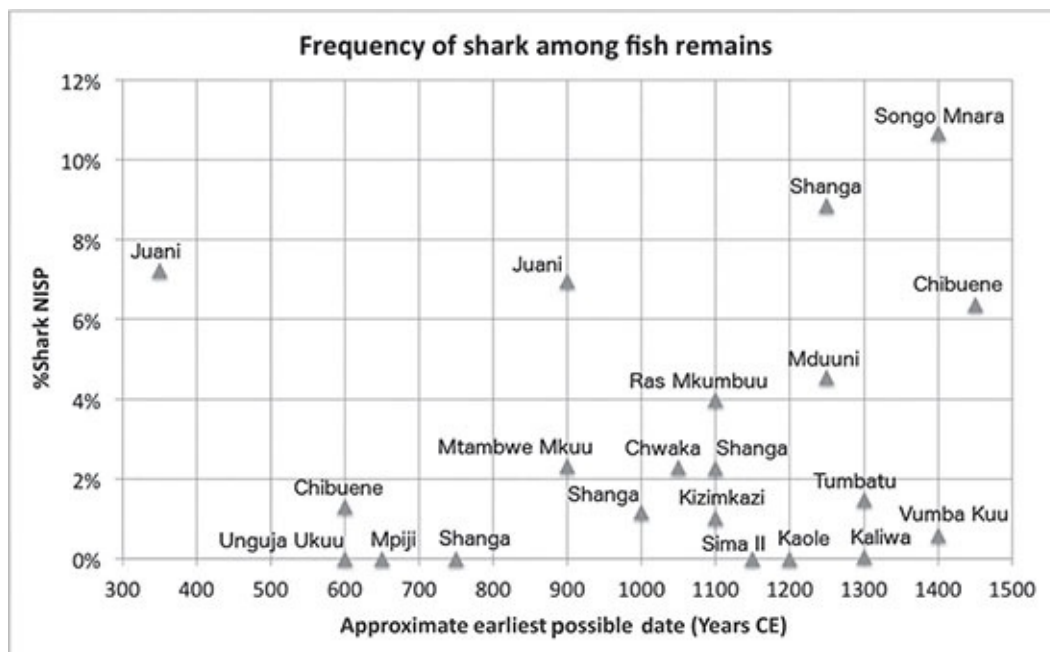
On the Comoros, similar shifts in livestock are imperceptible due to small sample sizes for second-millennium contexts. However, on Madagascar there are many early to mid-second-millennium sites with faunal records that demonstrate the importance of both caprines and cattle – including zebu – to the domestic economy (Dewar and Wright 1993; Parker Pearson 2010; Radimilahy 1998; Rakotozafy and Goodman 2005). Reliance on wild resources is minimal, with occasional lemur, tenrec, tortoise and bird remains. Marine resources remain important, particularly at seasonal fishing camps along the coastline, such as Talaky. At the Malagasy coastal town of Mahilaka, the presence of fish is noted along with a small number of pearl oysters, oysters and mangrove whelk. Based on the small samples of identified fish in the Comoros, it appears that a focus on reef fishing continues in this area,

Fishing and shellfish gathering also remain important, although to varying degrees, at eastern African coastal settlements, despite increased food production. The relative frequency of fish compared with other vertebrates is variable among settlements, ranging from around one-third to the vast majority at the towns of Mduuni, Chwaka, Tumbatu, Vumba Kuu, Songo Mnara and Kizimkazi, and the village of Kaliwa. Shellfish gathering persists as an important activity, although at sites with available diachronic data, Shanga and Pate, the frequency of invertebrate remains decreases into the second millennium. Fish continue to be rare in hinterland sites, as seen at Mtsengo and Mbuyuni (Helm 2000), where taxa mirror those exploited on the nearby coast, but also include some freshwater species. Further south at Gonja Maore, numerous pierced marine shells found 150 km from the coast (Walz 2010) indicate ties between coastal and inland peoples.

The focus on coastal inshore fishing, particularly around coral reefs, continues into the second millennium; however, a tendency to venture farther from shore is visible at several towns that have higher frequencies of shark remains than those recorded for the first millennium ([Figure 32.4](#)). Ethnohistorical records document the use of large-mesh *jarife* nets and trolling – pulling a baited fishing line through the water – to target these often large, fast-swimming predators beyond the reefs (Prins 1965, Quintana and Horton 2014). At Shanga the rising importance of domestic animals overlaps with an increased exploitation of shark (Horton and Mudida 1993; Mudida and Horton 1996) and the presence of more deep-water taxa (McClanahan and Omukotu 2011). A similar pattern occurs at Chibuene, with more shark remains in the late occupation levels, around the fourteenth century, than in the first-millennium occupation levels (Badenhorst *et al.* 2011). The high percentage of shark at the EIA occupation at Juani is associated with the earliest

evidence of sustained use of marine resources in the region (Crowther *et al.* in press). In later periods, shark remains are especially abundant at larger towns with evidence of socioeconomic hierarchy, hinting at a possible connection between shark fishing and the economic power required to invest in more expensive equipment and a larger crew for this fishing practice (Quintana Morales and Horton 2014), a dynamic seen in recent fishing populations in this region (Nakamura 2011). Furthermore, systematic excavations across the town of Songo Mnara retrieved higher numbers of shark and large-sized fish in deposits from coral houses than from mud-thatch houses, which are associated with higher and lower levels of socio-economic status respectively (Quintana Morales 2013). There is limited comparative data on intra-site faunal analysis (for example, Christie 2011), but further research on the distribution of resources within settlements can provide a more nuanced picture of animals' roles in past daily social and political interactions among inhabitants.

p.344



[Figure 32.4](#) Relative abundance of shark remains at Swahili sites. Excludes samples with fewer than 25 NISP. Where data could be separated by phase, the site appears multiple times; this applies to Chibuene, Shanga and Juani. See [Table 32.1](#) for site references

Themes in Swahili zooarchaeology: areas for further research

Subsistence technologies

Recent studies of Swahili technology focus on ceramics and their implications for food

preparation, consumption and social relations (for example, Fleisher 2010; Walshaw 2010; Wynne-Jones 2007). However, we can infer that a number of perishable procurement technologies are absent from the archaeological record and thus from discourse on human–animal interactions. Most of the terrestrial game found at Swahili coast sites are <10 kg and could have been trapped by combining excavated pits with wood- or fibre-based items. Fortunately, there are some ethnographic analogues that can inspire thinking about archaeologically invisible technologies. For example, Ingrams (1931) describes the use of pit-traps, wooden traps and snares on Unguja, where Williams *et al.* (1996) also record more recent use of palm-fibre nets. For marine turtles and mammals, spears were likely used, as attested by a pierced sea turtle bone from Unguja Ukuu (Prendergast and Quintana Morales unpublished data). Similarly, for Swahili fishers many factors would have determined the choice of gear, including fish size, local habitats and fisher’s skill. Ethnoarchaeological and ethnohistorical records for the region document recent use of basket traps, weirs, nets, lines and spears, among other gears (Glaesel 1997; Grottanelli 1955; Prins 1965; Quintana Morales 2013). Fishing lines and hooks are well suited to capture bottom-dwelling carnivorous fish like groupers, emperors and snappers. Baited traps attract small to medium-sized herbivores, including parrotfish and rabbitfish, whereas spears target larger individuals of these species. Fishing nets are generally less selective. Many of these tools are made of perishable materials; however, a small number of fishing tools, mainly iron hooks, have been recovered at several sites on the coast, offshore islands and Madagascar (Chami 1994; Fleisher 2003; Fleisher and LaViolette 2013; Horton 1996; Parker Pearson 2010; Radimilahy 1998).

p.345

Non-dietary uses of animals

Although zooarchaeological discourse has focused largely on food provisioning, animals and animal products were critical to other areas of Swahili life; for example, as trade goods, raw materials, and symbolic and ritual tokens. An important animal resource that is embedded, literally, in the very structure of Swahili architecture is coral. The non-branching, shallow-water coral, *Porites* sp., was extracted from the sea and moulded into intricately carved pieces and blocks for mosques and houses (Horton 1996). Fossil coral rocks (coral rag) were built into walls and burned to produce lime for mortar and plaster. On a smaller scale in size and occurrence, ornaments such bone, shell and ivory beads have been excavated from Swahili sites (for example, Chittick 1984; Horton 1996; Juma 2004). Traded animal products, such as ambergris, ‘tortoiseshell’ and ivory, are mentioned in travellers’ logs from as early as the first century CE (Casson 1989; Freeman-Grenville 1962). Cowries, in particular the Indian Ocean species *Monetaria moneta*, circulated widely as currency across Africa at the height of the slave trade in the eighteenth century (Hogendorn and Johnson 2003). Evidence of cowries at precolonial coastal and hinterland sites demonstrates the importance of these objects for trade, but it is not clear if they were

used as money. Archaeological (Wynne-Jones 2013) and ethnographic (Donley 1987) examples of animal offerings in the foundations of Swahili houses further demonstrate animals' symbolic value.

Animals and exchange

Many of the abovementioned traded animal products were moved from the continental interior to the coast and islands before moving onward to the Indian Ocean interaction sphere. Later sites and ethnohistoric data suggest that foragers played a key role, particularly in exchanges involving ivory or rhinoceros horn (Kusimba 2003). Future research may use faunal data to illuminate these connections between inland, hinterland and coastal communities. These ties have traditionally been less emphasised than those between the coast and the maritime world, with the exceptions usually focused on material culture (for example, Abungu and Mutoro 1993; Helm 2000; Kusimba 1999; Wright 2005).

While eastern Africa provided key animal products to an expanding Old World trade, a number of Asian animals were also introduced to the continent, with significant impacts (Boivin *et al.* 2013). Two introduced taxa already discussed, zebu cattle and chicken, have made important contributions to mobile pastoralist and village household economies, respectively. Commensals including black rat and house mouse (*Mus musculus*) were also introduced, and their potentially negative impacts on endemic vegetation and fauna, and the spread of disease, are areas ripe for research. Finally, cats, while northeast African and Asian in origin, may have been first introduced to the coast via ships, where they would have served as pest control.

Due to the difficulty of distinguishing zebu and taurine cattle bones, and the paucity of microfaunal data, little can be said about some of these introductions from published datasets, though zebu are reported from the hinterland and Zanzibar in the early second-millennium (Helm 2000; Van Neer 2001), and slightly earlier on Madagascar (Radimilahy 1998; Rakatozafy and Goodman 2005). Camels (*Camelus dromedarius*) also appear in the early second millennium (Chittick 1984; Mudida and Horton in press; Mudida and Horton 1996; Wilson and Omar 1997) and might, like increased rice consumption (Walshaw 2010), indicate shifting cultural identities on the coast and an orientation toward the maritime world. It is notable that camels, despite their advantages in arid climates, never gained traction beyond the coast and a handful of inland areas, likely due to their incompatibility with the interests and cultural traditions of cattle pastoralists (Marshall 2000); by contrast, taurine-indicine cattle crossbreeds are widespread, given their advantages noted earlier. Investigations on the inland dispersals of zebu and chicken could ultimately shed important light on Swahili coast-interior relationships.

Conclusion

A growing body of zooarchaeological data provides evidence of the myriad ways in which animals were integrated into the Swahili world. Whether in the form of worked raw materials, as trade goods or regular meals, animals and their products were essential to the economies of Swahili towns and villages, the daily lives of their inhabitants, and the regional and global networks in which they operated. Through the interaction of coastal and hinterland populations, marine shells travelled far inland while rhinoceros horn and elephant ivory reached the coastlines to be traded, along with marine turtle shell, across the Indian Ocean. Other animals, like cats and black rats, likely arrived to the coast aboard the ships of overseas traders. The earliest coastal populations subsisted on local wild fauna, hunting small terrestrial game, fishing at nearby reefs and collecting shellfish along the shoreline. While marine resource use prevailed alongside food production, the capture of wild terrestrial animals diminished over time. Livestock herding occurred from at least the sixth century CE, followed by the integration of chickens as large urban centres emerged along the coastlines. Important shifts in animal-based food subsistence practices are connected to the changing social arena between the first and second millennia CE. With growing urbanisation, intensified trade and increased social stratification, among other key changes, terrestrial economies became more focused on domesticated animals and marine exploitation expanded farther from shore. It is our hope that this brief summary of animal uses in the Swahili world demonstrates the value of the study of faunal archaeological material and provides impetus for further studies in this area.

References

- Abungu, G. and Mutoro, H. 1993. 'Coast-interior settlements and social relations in the Kenya coastal hinterland'. In *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns*, edited by T. Shaw, P. Sinclair, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, 694–704. London: Routledge.
- Allibert, C., Argant, A. and Argant, J. 1989. 'Le site de Dembeni (Mayotte, Archipel des Comores), Mission 1984'. *Etudes Océan Indien* 11: 63–172.
- Allibert, C. and Verin, P. 1996. 'The early pre-Islamic history of the Comores Islands: links with Madagascar and Africa'. In *The Indian Ocean in Antiquity*, edited by J. Reade, 417–38. London: Kegan Paul.
- Badenhorst, S., Sinclair, P., Ekblom, A. and Plug, I. 2011. 'Faunal remains from Chibuene, an Iron Age coastal trading station in Central Mozambique'. *Southern African Humanities* 23 (1): 1–15.
- Blench, R. 2006. *Archaeology, Language, and the African Past*. Lanham: AltaMira Press.
- Boivin, N., Crowther, A., Helm, R. and Fuller, D. Q. 2013. 'East Africa and Madagascar in the Indian Ocean world'. *Journal of World Prehistory* 26 (3): 213–81,

doi:10.1007/s10963-013-9067-4.

Boivin, N., Crowther, A., Prendergast, M. E. and Fuller, D. Q. 2014. 'Indian Ocean food globalisation and Africa'. *African Archaeological Review*: 1–35, doi:10.1007/s10437-014-9173-4.

Burgess, N. D. and Clarke, G. P. (Eds) 2000. *Coastal Forests of Eastern Africa*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN Forest Conservation Programme.

Casson, L. 1989. *The Periplus Maris Erythraei*. Princeton; Guildford: Princeton University Press.

Chami, F. A. 1994. *The Tanzanian Coast in the First Millennium ad: An Archaeology of the Iron-Working, Farming Communities*. Vol. 7. Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis.

Chami, F. A. 2001. 'The archaeology of the Rufiji region since 1987 to 2000: coastal and interior dynamics from AD 00 to 500'. In *People, Contacts and the Environment in the African Past*, edited by F. A. Chami, G. Pwiti and C. Radimilahy, 7–20. Dar es Salaam: University of Dar es Salaam Press.

p.347

Chami, F. A. 2002. 'The excavation of Kaole Ruins'. In *Southern Africa in the Swahili World*, edited by F. A. Chami and G. Pwiti, 25–49. Dar es Salaam: University of Dar es Salaam Press.

Chami, F. A. 2004. 'The archaeology of the Mafia Archipelago, Tanzania'. In *African Archaeology Networks: Reports and Views, Studies in the African Past* 4, edited by F. Chami, G. Pwiti and C. Radimilahy, 73–101. Dar es Salaam: University of Dar es Salaam Press.

Chami, F. A. 2009. *Zanzibar and the Swahili Coast from c. 30,000 Years Ago*. Dar es Salaam: E&D Vision Publishing.

Chami, F. A. and Msemwa, P. J. 1997. 'A new look at culture and trade on the Azanian coast'. *Current Anthropology* 38 (4): 673–7.

Chittick, N. H. 1984. *Manda: Excavations at an Island Port on the Kenya Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.

Christie, A. 2011. 'Exploring the social context of maritime exploitation in the Mafia Archipelago, Tanzania: an archaeological perspective'. PhD diss., University of York.

Crowther, A., Faulkner, P., Prendergast, M. E., Quintana Morales, E., Horton, M. C., Wilmsen, E., *et al.* 2016. 'Coastal subsistence, maritime trade, and the colonization of small offshore islands in eastern African prehistory'. *Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology* 11 (2): 211–37, doi:10.1080/15564894.2016.1188334.

Crowther, A., Horton, M., Kotarba-Morley, A., Prendergast, M. E., Quintana Morales, E., Wood, M., *et al.* 2014. 'Iron Age agriculture, fishing and trade in the Mafia Archipelago, Tanzania: new evidence from Ukunju Cave'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 49 (1): 21–44, doi:10.1080/0067270X.2013.878104.

Dewar, R. E. and Wright, H. T. 1993. 'The culture history of Madagascar'. *Journal of World*

- Prehistory* 7 (4): 417–66, doi:10.1007/BF00997802.
- Dewar, R. E., Radimilahy, C., Wright, H. T., Jacobs, Z., Kelly, G. O. and Berna, F. 2013. 'Stone tools and foraging in northern Madagascar challenge Holocene extinction models'. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA* 110: 12583–8.
- Donley, L. W. 1987. 'Life in the Swahili town house reveals the symbolic meaning of spaces and artefact assemblages'. *African Archaeological Review* 5 (1): 181–92, doi:10.1007/BF01117092.
- Fleisher, J. B. 2003. 'Viewing stonetowns from the countryside: an archaeological approach to Swahili regional systems, AD 800–1500'. PhD diss., University of Virginia.
- Fleisher, J. 2010. 'Rituals of consumption and the politics of feasting on the eastern African coast, AD 700–1500'. *Journal of World Prehistory* 23 (4): 195–217, doi:10.1007/s10963-010-9041-3.
- Fleisher, J. and LaViolette, A. 2013. 'The early Swahili trade village of Tumbe, Pemba Island, Tanzania, AD 600–950'. *Antiquity* 87: 1151–68.
- Fleisher, J. B., Lane, P., LaViolette, A., Horton, M., Pollard, E., Quintana Morales, E., *et al.* 2015. 'When did the Swahili become maritime?' *American Anthropologist* 117 (1): 100–15, doi:10.1111/aman.12171.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1962. *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the First to the Earlier Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Glaesel, H. 1997. 'Fishers, parks, and power: the socio-environmental dimensions of marine resource decline and protection on the Kenya Coast'. PhD diss., University of Wisconsin.
- Gommery, D., Ramanivosoa, B. and Faure, M. 2011. 'Oldest evidence of human activities in Madagascar on subfossil hippopotamus bones from Anjohibe (Mahajanga Province)'. *Comptes Rendus Palevol*, 10 (4): 271–8.
- Grottanelli, V. L. 1955. *Pescatori dell'Oceano Indiano; saggio etnologico preliminare sui Bagiuni, Bantu costieri dell'Oltregiuba*. Roma: Cremonese.
- Hamdun, S. and King, N. 1998. *Ibn Battuta in Black Africa*. Princeton: Markus Wiener.
- Helm, R. M. 2000. 'Conflicting histories: the archaeology of the iron-working, farming communities in the central and southern coast region of Kenya'. PhD diss., University of Bristol.
- Helm, R. M., Crowther, A., Shipton, C., Tengeza, A., Fuller, D. and Boivin, N. 2012. 'Exploring agriculture, interaction and trade on the eastern African littoral: preliminary results from Kenya'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 47 (1): 39–63, doi:10.1080/0067270X.2011.647947.
- Hogendorn, J. and Johnson, M. 2003. *The Shell Money of the Slave Trade*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Horton, M. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.

Horton, M. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. Oxford; Malden: Blackwell Publishers.

p.348

Horton, M. and Mudida, N. 1993. 'Exploitation of marine resources: evidence for the origin of the Swahili communities of East Africa'. In *Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals, and Towns*, edited by T. Shaw, P. Sinclair, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, 673–93. London; New York: Routledge.

Ingrams, W. H. 1931. *Zanzibar: Its History and Its People*. London: Cass.

Juma, A. 2004. *Unguja Ukuu on Zanzibar: An Archaeological Study of Early Urbanism*. Uppsala: Uppsala University.

Kusimba, C. M. 1999. *The Rise and Fall of Swahili States*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.

Kusimba, S. B. 2003. *African Foragers: Environment, Technology, Interactions*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.

Marshall, F. 1989. 'Rethinking the role of *Bos indicus* in sub-Saharan Africa'. *Current Anthropology* 30: 235–40.

Marshall, F. 2000. 'The origins and spread of domestic animals in East Africa'. In *Origins and Development of African Livestock: Archaeology, Genetics, Linguistics and Ethnography*, edited by R. Blench and K. C. MacDonald, 191–221. London: UCL Press.

McClanahan, T. R. and Omukoto, J. O. 2011. 'Comparison of modern and historical fish catches (AD 750–1400) to inform goals for marine protected areas and sustainable fisheries'. *Conservation Biology* 25 (5): 945–55, doi:10.1111/j.1523-1739.2011.01694.x.

Msemwa, P. J. 1994. 'An ethnoarchaeological study on shellfish collecting in a complex urban setting'. PhD diss., Brown University.

Mudida, N. and Horton, M. 1996. 'Subsistence at Shanga: the faunal record'. In *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*, by Mark Horton, 378–93. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.

Mudida, N. and Horton, M. in press. 'Subsistence and the faunal record'. In *Zanzibar and Pemba: The Archaeology of an Indian Ocean Archipelago*. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.

Nakamura, R. 2011. 'Multi-ethnic coexistence in Kilwa Island, Tanzania'. *Shima: The International Journal of Research into Island Cultures* 5 (1): 44–68.

Nurse, D. and Hinnebusch, T. J. 1993. *Swahili and Sabakiabakii and Sabak Thoma*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Parker Pearson, M. (Ed.) 2010. *Pastoralists, Warriors and Colonists: The Archaeology of Southern Madagascar*. BAR International Series 2139. Oxford: Archaeopress.

Perez, V., Burney, D. A., Godfrey, L. R. and Nowak-Kemp, M. 2003. 'Box 4: butchered sloth lemurs'. In Godfrey, L. and Jungers, W. 'The extinct sloth lemurs of Madagascar'.

Evolutionary Anthropology 12: 252–63.

- Prendergast, M. E., Rouby, H., Punnwong, P., Marchant, R., Crowther, A., Kourampas, N., *et al.* 2016. 'Continental island formation and the archaeology of defaunation on Zanzibar, Eastern Africa'. *PLoS ONE* 11 (2): e0149565.
- Prins, A. H. J. 1965. *Sailing from Lamu: A Study of Maritime Culture in Islamic East Africa*. Assen: Van Gorcum.
- Punwong, P. 2013. 'Holocene mangrove dynamics and sea level changes: records from the Tanzanian coast'. PhD diss., University of York.
- Quintana Morales, E. M. 2013. 'Reconstructing Swahili foodways: the archaeology of fishing and fish consumption in coastal East Africa, AD 500–1500'. PhD diss., University of Bristol.
- Quintana Morales, E. M. and Horton, M. 2014. 'Fishing and fish consumption in the Swahili communities of East Africa, 700–1400 CE'. In *Human Exploitation of Aquatic Landscapes* special issue, edited by R. Fernandes and J. Meadows. *Internet Archaeology* 37, doi:10.11141/ia.37.3.
- Radimilahy, C. 1998. *Mahilaka: An Archaeological Investigation of an Early Town in Northwestern Madagascar*. Uppsala: Uppsala University.
- Rakotozafy, L. M. A. and Goodman, S. M. 2005. 'Contribution à l'étude zooarchéologique de la région du Sud-ouest et extrême Sud de Madagascar sur la base des collections de l'ICMAA de l'Université d'Antananarivo'. *TALOHA*, 14–15. Available online at: <http://www.taloha.info>. <http://www.taloha.info/document.php?id=181>.
- Richmond, M. D. (Ed.) 2011. *A Field Guide to the Seashores of Eastern Africa and the Western Indian Ocean Islands*. Dar es Salaam: Sida, WIOMSA.
- Shipton, C., Crowther, A., Kourampas, N., Prendergast, M. E., Horton, M., Douka, K., *et al.* 2016. 'Reinvestigation of Kuumbi Cave, Zanzibar, reveals Later Stone Age coastal habitation, early Holocene abandonment, and Iron Age reoccupation'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 51 (2): 197–233, doi: 10.1080/0067270X.2016.117330.
- p.349
- Soper, R. 1967. 'Kwale: an Early Iron Age site in south-eastern Kenya'. *Azania* 2 (1): 1–17, doi:10.1080/00672706709511437.
- Spalding, M. D., Ravilious, C. and Green, E. P. 2001. *World Atlas of Coral Reefs*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Available online at: <http://archive.org/details/worldatlasofcora01spal>.
- Van Neer, W. 2001. 'Animal remains from the medieval site of Kizimkazi Dimbani, Zanzibar'. In *Islam in East Africa: New Sources: Archives, Manuscripts and Written Historical Sources, Oral History, Archaeology: International Colloquium, Rome, 2–4 December 1999*, edited by B. S. Amoretti, 385–407. Rome: Herder. Available online at: <https://lirias.kuleuven.be/handle/123456789/209388>.

- Walshaw, S. 2010. 'Converting to rice: urbanization, Islamization and crops on Pemba Island, Tanzania, AD 700–1500'. *World Archaeology* 42 (1): 137–54, doi:10.1080/00438240903430399.
- Walsh, M. T. 2007. 'Island subsistence: hunting, trapping and the translocation of wildlife in the western Indian Ocean'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 42 (1): 83–113, doi:10.1080/00672700709480452.
- Walz, J. R. 2010. 'Route to a regional past: an archaeology of the lower Pangani (Ruvu) basin, Tanzania, 500–1900 CE'. PhD diss., University of Florida.
- Williams, A., Mwinyi, A. A. and Ali, S. J. 1996. *A Population Survey of the Mini-antelope – Ader's duiker (Cephalophus adersi), Zanzibar blue duiker (Cephalophus monticola sundevalli), Suni (Neotragus moschatus moschatus) – of Unguja, Zanzibar*. Zanzibar: Commission for Natural Resources.
- Wilson, T. H. and Omar, A. L. 1997. 'Archaeological investigations at Pate'. *Azania* 32: 31–76.
- Wright, D. 2005. 'New perspectives on early regional interaction networks of East African trade: a view from Tsavo National Park, Kenya'. *African Archaeological Review* 22 (3): 111–40.
- Wright, H. T. 1992. 'Early Islam, oceanic trade and town development on Nzwani: the Comorian Archipelago in the XIth–XVth centuries AD'. *Azania* 27 (1): 81–128, doi:10.1080/00672709209511432.
- Wright, H. T., Sinopoli, C., Wojnarowski, L., Hoffman, E. S., Scott, S. L., Redding, R. W. and Goodman, S. M. 1984. 'Early seafarers of the Comoro Islands: the Dembeni Phase of the IXth–Xth centuries AD'. *Azania* 19: 13–59, doi:10.1080/00672708409511327.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2007. 'It's what you do with it that counts: performed identities in the East African coastal landscape'. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 7 (3): 325–45, doi:10.1177/1469605307081392.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2013. 'The public life of the Swahili stonehouse, 14th–15th centuries AD'. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 32 (4): 759–73, doi:10.1016/j.jaa.2013.05.003.

33

PLANT USE AND THE CREATION OF ANTHROPOGENIC LANDSCAPES

Coastal forestry and farming

Sarah Walshaw and Jack Stoetzel

Introduction

Human-plant relationships are at the forefront of many questions driving archaeological research in eastern Africa. Agricultural expansion to the region, local and oceanic exchange, production and consumption patterns, urbanisation and climate change can all be elucidated in part through archaeobotanical inquiry. Botanical methods are relatively new to the coast, with the first systematic flotation being conducted in 2002 (Walshaw 2005) and the first phytolith study a few years later (Sulas and Madella 2012). However, the discipline is now building foundational knowledge using current – and at times ground-breaking – methods.

In this chapter we review current knowledge of Swahili landscape, agriculture and plant use that derives from archaeobotanical investigations at archaeological sites, botanical surveys and written sources. This is complemented by information from local farmers where appropriate. After a brief section addressing methodological challenges and opportunities met by archaeobotanists in this region, the chapter is divided chronologically. We begin with an introduction of first-millennium debates and social patterns apparent in early landscapes, and then move to a discussion of plant use during the height of Swahili urbanism in the eleventh to fifteenth centuries. We contemplate the creation of Swahili anthropogenic landscapes and the botanical exchanges brought with European and Omani imperialism in the third section; this period is the least understood archaeobotanically and thus our discussions are speculative at present. We conclude by considering temporal trends and regional patterning in plant and resource use among the

Swahili communities studied to date, and by examining contemporary environmental conditions and human-plant interactions as analogs for past processes.

Archaeobotanical sources and methods

Archaeobotanists rely on multiple sources of information to construct and interpret ancient plant use among Swahili communities. Archaeological plant residues are evidence of which plants/parts were used, but when supplemented by written records, oral histories, ethnobotany and ethnoarchaeological data, further questions about plant processing and human-plant relationships can be addressed. Through ethnobotanical and ethnoarchaeological studies, scholars can learn from local farmers and cooks whose expert knowledge can be applied to historical and archaeological questions. Local knowledge systems about plant communities can also inform debates of recent concern, including land distribution, food security and sovereignty, climate change and natural resource exploration/extraction.

p.351

Macroscopic plant remains such as wood, nutshell, seeds and chaff are preserved in Swahili contexts almost exclusively through charring. Macrobotanicals are recovered using the water separation method known as flotation, and much of the work discussed herein has relied on bucket flotation over tank flotation. The bucket method holds several advantages for researchers working in eastern Africa: it can be accomplished largely using locally available equipment, does not require electricity, can be water-conservative (particularly when water is recycled), and permits observation of recovery during the process.

However, not all plants produce macroscopically recognisable remains, and not many human-plant interactions result in charring; archaeobotanists employ microbotanical methods to access such residues. Archaeologists have used phytolith analysis with great success on the Swahili coast (for example, Sulas and Madella 2012; Pawlowicz *et al.* 2014; Stoetzel 2014; McParland and Walshaw 2015). Phytoliths are opal silica bodies that accumulate regularly in some plants (notably grasses, palms and bananas), and can be extracted from archaeological sediment in a laboratory setting. Starch analysis and wood identification are promising methods for reconstructing landscape use and plant foods, but these have yet to be applied to coastal archaeological sites. Starch analysis holds promise for recovering remains of plant foods exploited for their starchy underground storage organs and, if viable in this region, could be particularly instrumental in tracking the introduction of New World crops.

Farming the coast: first-millennium plants and people

Vegetation communities in coastal eastern Africa comprise the ‘Swahilian regional center of endemism’ (Clarke 1998; Burgess and Clarke 2000; Prins and Clarke 2006), a subset of the Zanzibar-Inhambane Regional Mosaic (White 1983; Sinclair 1991). This center of endemism includes a mixture of dry-forests, forests, woodlands and grass coverage (Beentje 1990; Burgess *et al.* 1998). Researchers assume that coastal forests covered the coastline prior to the introduction of agriculture (Hawthorn 1993). As we detail below, anthropogenic influences appear to have been responsible for the patchy distribution of coastal forests along the contemporary coastline (Huang *et al.* 2003). Grasses extended into the disturbed areas; specific relationships between grass species and local agriculture are detailed by Boonman (1983) for each vegetation zone found along the coast (see [Table 33.1](#)).

The expectation of forest cover along the Swahili coast derives from precipitation patterns and an annual temperature averaging $> 23^{\circ}\text{C}$. Monsoons dominate coastal climates as they deliver cool, moist air from March–May and a dry period from July–December (Hastenrath 1991; Hastenrath and Greischar 1993; Dunbar *et al.* 1994; Zinke *et al.* 2005). Precipitation ranges between 500 and 2,000 mm annually, falling heaviest in equatorial areas of the northern Tanzanian coast (Ojany and Ogendo 1973; Darwall and Guard 2000). Rain is delivered to a mosaic of sediments including sandy loams, coral rag, limestone-derived sands and clay-rich soils (Russell 1977). Soils with the highest levels of fertility cluster in equatorial areas, coupling with abundant rainfall to make these regions the most agriculturally fecund ([Figure 33.1](#)). Despite varied levels of fertility, farmers managed to convert coastal areas across eastern Africa into anthropogenic landscapes rich in resources with clear social function. As we detail below, rain-fed cultivars and mangrove forests represent the resources that have been most heavily emphasised by Swahili people.

[Table 33.1](#) Six vegetation zones used by grass-specific researchers of eastern Africa

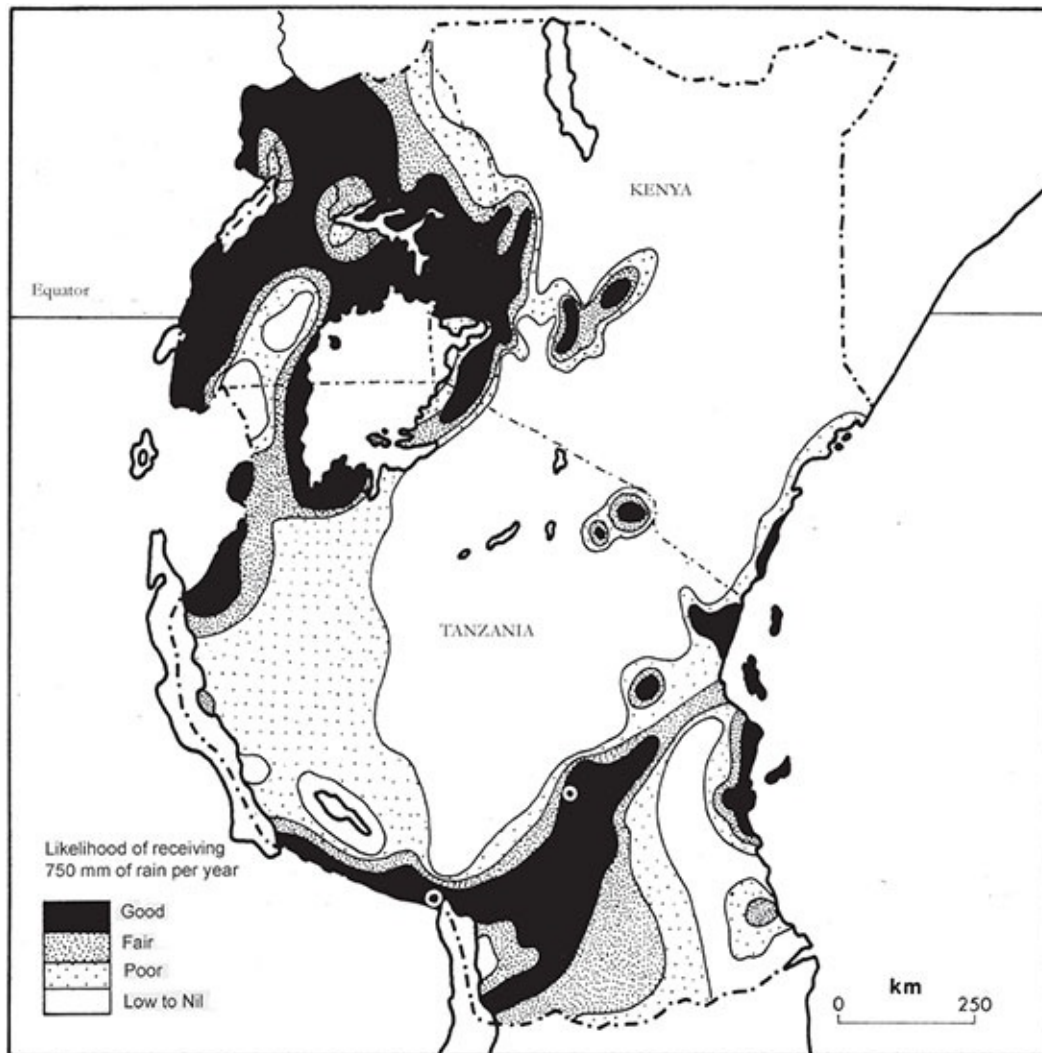
<i>Eco-climatic zone</i>	<i>Moisture Index range</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Vegetation and land use</i>
Afro-alpine	> 0	I	Afro-alpine moorland and grassland, or barren land, at high altitude above the forest line; of limited use and potential, except as water catchment.
Equatorial to dry sub humid	> -10	II	Forests and derived grasslands and bush lands. The potential is for forestry, intensive agriculture including pyrethrum, coffee and tea at higher elevations.
Dry sub humid to semiarid	-10 to -30	III	Land not of forest potential, carrying a variable vegetation cover (moist woodland, bush land or savannah), the trees characteristically broad-leaved (e.g. <i>Brachystegia</i> or <i>Combretum</i>) and the larger shrubs mostly evergreen. The agricultural potential is high, soil and topography permitting, with emphasis on ley farming.
Semiarid	-30 to -42	IV	Land of marginal agricultural potential, carrying as natural vegetation dry forms of woodland and savannah (often an <i>Acacia</i> - <i>Themeda</i> association) but including dry <i>Brachystegia</i> woodland and equivalent deciduous or semi-evergreen bush land. This is potentially productive rangeland.
Arid	-42 to -51	V	Land only very locally suited to agriculture, the woody vegetation being dominated by <i>Commiphora</i> , <i>Acacia</i> , and allied genera, mostly of shrubby habit. Perennial grasses such as <i>Cenchrus ciliaris</i> and <i>Chloris roxburghiana</i> can dominate, but succumb readily to harsh management.
Very arid	-51 to -57	VI	Rangeland of low potential, the vegetation being dwarf shrub grassland, or shrub grassland with <i>Acacia reficiens</i> subsp. <i>Misera</i> , often confined to watercourses and depressions with barren land between. Perennial grasses (e.g. <i>Chrysopogon aucherii</i>) are localised within a predominantly annual grassland; productivity is confined largely to unreliable seasonal flushes and grazing systems must be based on nomadism. Populations of both wild and domestic stock are restricted severely by the environment.

Source: adapted from Boonman 1983: 21.

One of the ongoing debates in African archaeology concerns the timing and nature of the expansion of iron-working agriculturalists into and through eastern Africa. Metal remains dating to the early first millennium (Mapunda, this volume) signal the earliest such date known in eastern Africa. However, the arrival of domesticated African grains from western and northeast Africa (pearl millet, sorghum) and domestication of finger millet in eastern Africa remains poorly understood. Currently the earliest evidence of domestic plants on the coast is pearl millet recovered from early levels at Tumbe on Pemba Island (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013; Fleisher, this volume), directly AMS-dated to 1370 +/- 40 years cal. bp (Walshaw 2005, 2010). Domesticated sorghum recovered from the mid-first millennium bc at the site of Kawa, Sudan (Fuller 2004) represents the earliest sorghum in northeast Africa. Finger millet is found in domesticated form earliest at

Kursakata, Chad, within Iron Age levels (one specimen dated by association to approximately first century AD; Klee *et al.* 2000). Early- to mid-first millennium finger millet found in Ethiopia at Ona Nagast (D'Andrea 2008) and at several sites in Rwanda (Giblin and Fuller 2011) are consistent with a spread of this domesticate south and east (ibid.). Elucidating early agriculture in eastern Africa requires multi-disciplinary projects and processes (Kabuye 1991) and, with continued attention to archaeobotany, further finds may show how, where, and when domestication(s) took place.

p.353



[Figure 33.1](#) Rainfall distribution in eastern Africa (Source: adapted from Pritchard 1975: 29, Figure 15)

Another debate concerns the movement of peoples and plants from Southeast Asia across the Indian Ocean and into Madagascar, the Comoros, and ultimately eastern Africa (Boivin and Crowther, this volume). Linguistic data suggest that banana, taro and yam were brought to continental Africa from Southeast Asia (Blench 2010). Based on linguistic evidence, coconut, rice, greater yam (*Dioscorea alata*) and saffron are thought to have been

introduced to Madagascar by Austronesian settlers in the first millennium ce, and from there spread to the continent (Beaujard 2011). Recent scholarship has centred on locating and interpreting archaeological evidence of botanical, material and ideological exchanges across the Indian Ocean (Fuller *et al.* 2011; Hoogervorst 2013; Shipton *et al.* 2013; Crowther *et al.* 2014; Gerbault *et al.* 2014.) Rice in eastern Africa is likely *Oryza sativa*, Asian rice introduced from Southeast Asia or, less likely, from the Indian subcontinent (Wright 1984; Walshaw 2010, 2015b; Crowther *et al.* in press). Asian rice found through archaeobotanical investigations serves as crucial evidence elucidating the colonisation of Madagascar by Austronesian travellers (Crowther *et al.* 2016).

p.354

Explanations of the Iron Age cultural assemblages expressed along the coast describe how mid-first millennium CE communities did not install a single set of technologies across the region. Evidence collected from a range of village settlements indicates subsistence agriculture spread to eventually become a feature of Iron Age life here. The earliest domestic plants cultivated in a continental, coastal context included African grains such as sorghum and several species of millet. Archaeobotanical evidence from first-millennium CE contexts suggests a rapid spread of the cultivars, as they are noted in northern Kenya, Pemba Island (Tumbe and Kimimba), southern Tanzania, the Comoros Islands and central Mozambique (Chittick 1974; Wright 1984, 1992; Horton 1994; Walshaw 2005; Pawlowicz 2011; Helm *et al.* 2012; Crowther *et al.* 2014; Stoetzel 2014; Boivin and Crowther, this volume). Iron Age farmers likely applied shifting, swidden agricultural techniques to rain-fed plots to produce the cultivars. Ethnographic investigations record that twentieth-century farmers shifted their farm plots on one- to three-year intervals, and that abandoned plots were left fallow for three- to five-year periods (Middleton 1961). Magnified over centuries, the shifting agricultural techniques popular among recent and modern farmers would have altered endemic plant communities along the coast (Bovill 1917; Marshland 1938). The use of fire to clear agricultural plots on sub-decadal timescales would have prompted a shift towards grass cover rather than the forest or dense scrub of coastal plant communities. Twentieth-century farmers decreased the length of fallow periods in an attempt to overcome the lack of arable cropland available to the expanding rural populations (Pike 1938; Brock 1966). Modern farmers understood the ecological ramifications of such decisions. Recent archaeological investigations suggest that prehistoric farmers attempted to fertilise farm plots (Pawlowicz *et al.* 2014); such actions suggest that prehistoric farmers also recognised that decisions impacted local ecological conditions.

Permanent villages, iron production, pastoralism and a common set of ceramic forms and decorative motifs were characteristic of Iron Age communities across the region (Horton and Middleton 2000). While earlier chapters detail the social impact of such Iron Age technologies, we focus on the fact that each of these activities consumed coastal forests. Household production spheres apparent in Iron Age villages relied on local wood

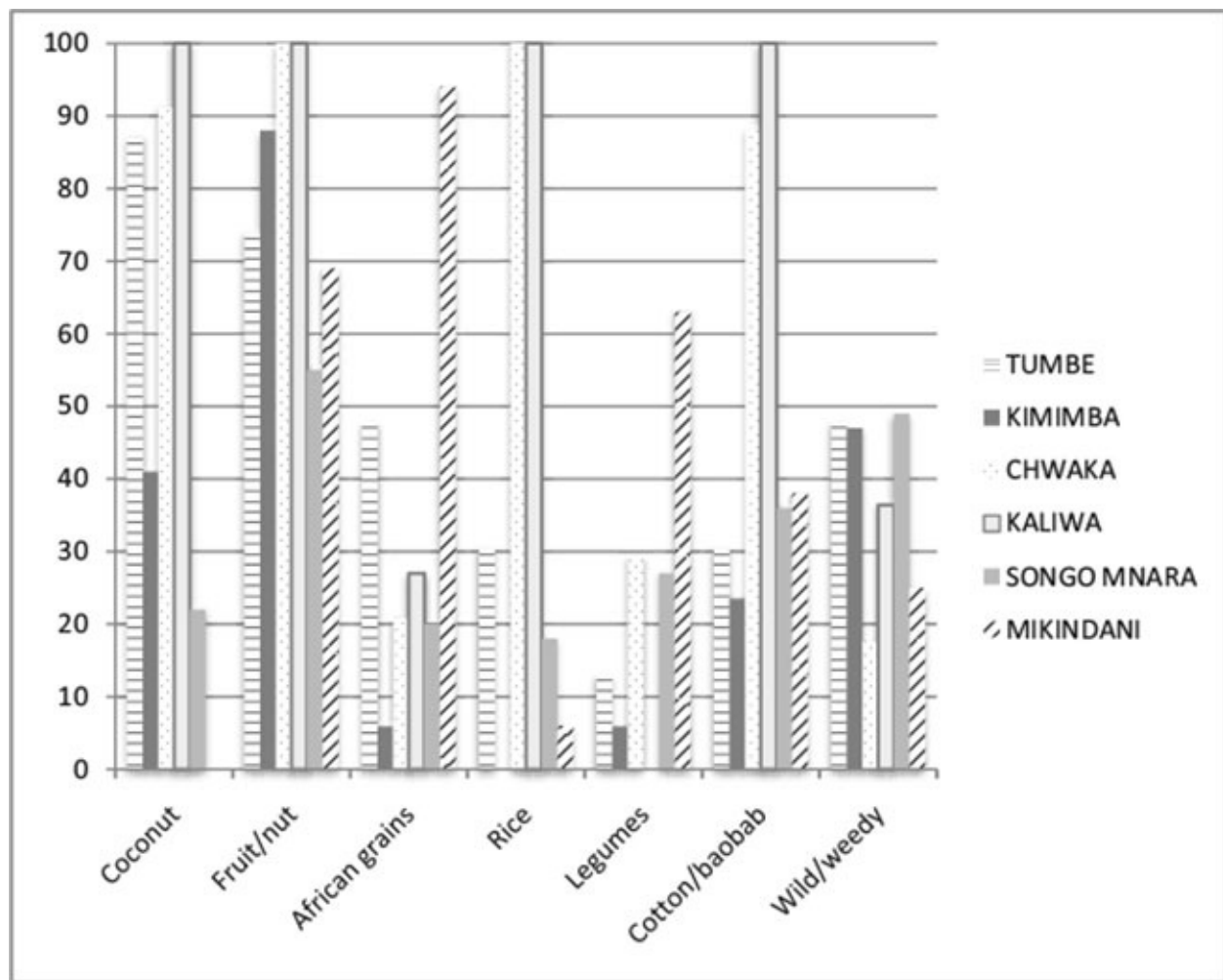
and coconut resources to cook food, fuel iron production, support earth-and-thatch structures and fire ceramics (Stoetzel 2014). Domestic animals further spurred forest clearance because the ungulates available to coastal populations thrived on grass fodder (Dumont *et al.* 1995; Illius *et al.* 1999; Boland *et al.* 2011). Agropastoral subsistence strategies supported permanent villages; the latter, in turn, presented the platform from which Iron Age peoples interacted with the Indian Ocean world. Ongoing interaction with that commercial world introduced new domesticated plants to the coast. Exotic grains include Asiatic rice, which played an important role in second-millennium urban settlements situated in zones of high precipitation (Wright 1984, 1992, 1993; Walshaw 2005, 2010).

Urban landscapes: agriculture and the rise and fall of Swahili stonetowns

How did urbanisation influence agriculture on the coast? Our understanding of the process is limited to data from a few sites; however, these show that some areas experienced agricultural specialisation while others may not have ([Figure 33.2](#)). Pemba Island sites demonstrate a specialisation in rice agriculture (Walshaw 2010, 2015b). By the establishment of the town of Chwaka (*c.* 1050 CE) on Pemba (LaViolette, this volume), the residents had become reliant on rice agriculture. Archaeobotanical evidence of rice (grains and/or chaff) were found in all contexts at Chwaka, in contrast to only a handful of African grains (Walshaw 2005, 2010, 2015b). Moreover, rice-concentration features consistent with household storage were noted. Near Chwaka, at the fourteenth–fifteenth-century village site of Kaliwa, a similar pattern of rice dominance was found (Walshaw 2005, 2015b). However, such widespread availability may have been restricted to the lush landscapes of Pemba and its environs, because this pattern does not hold elsewhere. Further south along the coast, at the site of Songo Mnara in the Kilwa Archipelago (Wynne-Jones, this volume), African grains remain important alongside Asiatic rice (Walshaw 2015a). Archaeobotanical evidence from the site of Kilwa itself, limited to one serendipitous household floor concentration, contained only sorghum (Chittick 1974: 52). Continuing southward, archaeobotanical evidence from the Mikindani region of southern Tanzania shows a continued reliance on African grains. This observation is consistent with other material signatures of this region, where the coastal-dwelling population maintained strong ties to more interior regions (Pawlowicz 2011, this volume).

Excavations at the site of Songo Mnara (Wynne-Jones, this volume) have presented a unique opportunity to examine spatial relationships among the site's structures and open areas using microbotanical data (Sulas and Madella 2012). McParland has conducted high-resolution phytolith sampling of several structures at the site, including a coral-rag house

and an earth and thatch structure. The presence of *Sorghum bicolor* husk phytoliths in close association with a grinding stone provides evidence of dehusking in the proposed interior surface of an earthen structure, which possibly served as domestic or craft production space (McParland and Walshaw 2015). Macrobotanically rich contexts were found at the rear of several stone house-structures at Songo Mnara, demarcating cooking and crafting areas that were likely spaces that women frequented (Walshaw 2015a). Preliminary macrobotanical evidence from the same earth and thatch structure sampled by McParland suggests that users of this space did not have the same access to Asian rice that stonehouse inhabitants had: one chaff element was found in the daub structure versus three grains and 39 pieces of chaff in the stonehouse (McParland and Walshaw 2015).



[Figure 33.2](#) Graph showing different frequencies of plant types at a range of sites along the Swahili coast

Interestingly, urbanisation may not have led to different agricultural production strategies: rice appears to have been hand-harvested and stored in the chaff, similar to how other African grains were processed (Walshaw 2015b). Rice, sorghum, pearl millet and

finger millet are all easily transported with the grains still on the stalk or spike, which goes some way to explaining why chaff elements are common in household storage and processing contexts. Indeed, it is likely that grains were transported as part of the thriving regional dhow economy that served ports along the coast.

Contested landscapes: imperialisms in ecological perspective

Colonialism on the eastern African coast began with the Portuguese in the last years of the fifteenth century; in the centuries after, France, the Omani Mazrui, Germany and England established sovereignty over different regions of the coastline (Strandes 1961; Axelson 1973; Berg 1974; Alpers 1975; Freeman-Grenville 1975; Wolfe 1982; Sheriff 1987; Prestholdt, this volume). Historical evidence suggests that, prior to the nineteenth century, imperial governments were concerned primarily with the construction of forts and garrisons (Freeman-Grenville 1965). These bastions of foreign residence seem not to have caused much change to the environmental resource management strategies enacted by Swahili peoples. The only clear ecological influence of early attempts at colonialism was the sudden spread of maize (Feierman 1990; McCann 2005), yet archaeobotanical evidence for this grain is scant prior to the nineteenth century (discussed further below).

Buoyed by the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885, German colonisers in the region began to invest in the infrastructure necessary to develop commercial potential for plant-resource extraction (Hurst 2003). Forestry institutes established between the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries identified, exploited and maintained wood resources across the coastline (Stoetzel 2014). Such institutes initially introduced monoculture and cash-crops before transitioning, in the mid-twentieth century, towards conservation campaigns that have continued through the modern period (Shetler 2007; Brockington *et al.* 2008). The Omani sultanate introduced clove tree monoculture to the Zanzibar Archipelago in the early nineteenth century that was active into the mid-twentieth century (Kirsopp 1926; Crofts 1959). Early in the twentieth century, colonial governments introduced coffee and cashew production to well-watered continental zones, while sisal was restricted to arid areas (Hitchcock 1959; Wescott 1984). In addition to the array of introduced cultivars, modern landscapes bear physical evidence of colonial regimes in the form of terraces intended to channel rainfall, and contour bunds (ridges) installed to mitigate erosion (Brewin 1965; Brett 1973). It would be interesting to see how landscapes bear the scars of scorched-earth tactics undertaken by the *Schutztruppe* during the Maji-Maji conflict (for example, Schmidt 2010) and World War I, and the ensuing famines known from oral histories (of which several can be found in Giblin and Monson 2010).

Several archaeobotanical studies have sampled the post-1600 period on the coast. The Omani Mazrui deposits from the site of Tumbe (Pemba Island) date to the eighteenth–nineteenth centuries, and small-scale archaeobotanical recovery was carried out to

investigate diet and agriculture during this period. The sparse seed assemblage was dominated by rice, pearl millet, millets resembling pearl millet and cotton/baobab (Walshaw 2005, 2015b). At 60 per cent presence across contexts, Asiatic rice was the most ubiquitous staple, however pearl millet (40 per cent ubiquitous; 60 per cent if one adds possible pearl millet to this measure) was also widespread. This suggests that rice was common but not the dominant food staple in Tumbe during the period of Omani imperialism. Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, maize is absent from the Mazrui component of Tumbe.

p.357

Archaeobotanical studies at other sites indicate that maize was a principal component of eastern African diets by the nineteenth century. At the sites of Amathwoya, Makaroboi, and Koromio in Kenya, archaeobotanical analysis by Walshaw (in Marshall 2011) was included in a wider study of local economies and the creation of community at *watoro* (refugees from slavery) settlements (Marshall 2011; Marshall and Kiriamu, this volume). At these sites, maize was a major component of the food production story. It dominates the assemblage of Makaroboi in particular; however, coastal crops such as Asiatic rice and coconut were present, as were local African food plants (sorghum, baobab). Considerable variation in diet could be seen between sites and among structures within sites, suggesting the presence of storage features. Also indicated at Koromio was low incidence of sharing/trading of foodstuffs between households (Marshall 2011: 375). In contrast, at Makaroboi the dominance of maize across the site and the homogeneity of household plant remains suggests heightened community cooperation and access to similar field types. This interpretation is supported by historical sources attesting to the establishment of the village adjacent to river-fed *shambas* or fields (Marshall 2011: 375).

Recent research has illuminated how the nineteenth-century caravan trade, which brought captives, ivory and other inland valuables to the coast, affected food production and ecosystems in local communities along its route. Thomas Biginagwa (2012; Biginagwa and Mapunda, this volume) found little change in animal food-production strategies along the northern caravan route, through zooarchaeological investigations at three caravan halts in the Lower Pangani Basin (northeastern Tanzania). Very recently, archaeobotanical investigations began testing how plant food-production was influenced along the northern and southern route halts (T. Biginagwa and C. Mgombele, personal communication, 2015). It will be interesting to see if staple crops follow a similar pattern to that of animal food-production.

Modern landscapes in historical perspective: how archaeologists use current analogues to interpret the past

Botanical surveys conducted in tandem with archaeological projects in southern coastal Tanzania reveal plant species and communities available in contemporary landscapes. Preliminary investigations document a diverse array of plants in two regions, on Songo Mnara island and around Mikindani Bay (Stoetzel 2014). [Table 33.2](#) documents the distribution of plant types recorded in these two regions. The categories of plant types listed here may be misleading, as the primary difference between ‘scrub’ and ‘tree’ designations was the size of the particular stand of plants encountered. The botanical surveys suggest that anthropogenic influences do not preclude coastal ecologies from supporting a range of plant species.

Archaeologists have used current practices of non-mechanised agriculture to model ancient methods. Such analogies are not necessarily built on the basis of assumed cultural continuity, but from a connection between human actions during crop processing and the resulting botanical residues. Today, subsistence farmers observed on the islands of Pemba (Walshaw 2015b) and Songo Mnara (Walshaw 2015a) harvest rice by hand, which eliminates the weeds of cultivation prevalent among harvests from ploughed or scythed fields. This observation has helped archaeobotanists interpret their relatively weed-poor assemblages as resulting from hand-harvesting of rice and millets on the coast. Moreover, speaking with farmers about their farming strategies and collecting oral histories present an opportunity to record the rich environmental knowledge that coastal peoples express, as they harvest food and forestry products from 1,500-year-old anthropogenic landscapes.

p.358

[Table 33.2](#) Types of plants encountered in modern landscapes surrounding archaeological sites Songo Mnara and Mikindani Bay

<i>Plant type</i>	<i>Songo Mnara: number identified</i>	<i>Mikindani Bay: number identified</i>	<i>Notable plant families recovered in survey</i>
Grass	9	12	Poaceae, Panicoideae (subfamily), Pooideae (subfamily)
Herb	24	42	Asteraceae, Apocynaceae, Cyperaceae, Malvaceae, Musaceae, Passifloraceae
Shrub	25	28	Boraginaceae, Euphorbiaceae, Fabacea, Sapindaceae, Sterculiaceae
Tree	26	21	Annonaceae, Mimosaceae

Archaeobotany and the future of coastal landscapes and people

As shown above, archaeobotany has expanded our knowledge of human-plant relations along the Swahili coast considerably, and researchers continue to make substantive

contributions and methodological innovations. We have noted emerging trends in temporal and spatial patterning, particularly in staple crops, yet these require further testing at coastal archaeological sites in order to build robust interpretations. We anticipate that growing interest in Indian Ocean global connectivities, historical archaeology of the Portuguese and Omani periods, and the archaeology of slavery in eastern African trade systems and society will all be well served by archaeobotanical enquiry.

Archaeobotanists working on the coast also have the strong potential to shape the field by engaging with scholars and communities on topics of food security and food sovereignty (Logan 2013). These are among the major challenges facing peoples in eastern Africa today, and researchers have the opportunity to contribute examples from the past and to place archaeological data in dialogue with written and oral histories in order to address development practices and priorities (Stump 2010). Archaeobotanists should also prioritise botanical collaboration with local herbaria, ethnobotanical data collection and working with local experts to record oral histories and document knowledge of plant and other environmental resource use. In this way, we can address some of the shortcomings of westernised and academic archaeology identified by Pikirayi (2015), who calls for archaeologists to ground themselves through relevance to local communities and priorities. Considering how eastern Africa is being affected by climate change, contestations over land and development, and economic and food poverty, knowledge about ancient and modern natural resource use has never been more relevant.

p.359

References

- Alpers, A. 1975. *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Axelson, E. 1973. *Portuguese in South-East Africa 1488–1600*. Johannesburg: C. Struik.
- Beaujard, P. 2011. ‘The first migrants to Madagascar and their introduction of plants: linguistic and ethnological evidence’. *Azania* 46 (2): 169–89.
- Beentje, H. J. 1990. *Botanical Assessment of Ngezi Forest, Pemba*. Zanzibar: Zanzibar Forest Development Project and the Finnish Board of Forestry.
- Berg, F. J. 1974. ‘The coast from the Portuguese invasion to the rise of the Zanzibar Sultanate’. In *Zamani: A Survey of East African History*, edited by B. A. Ogot, 115–34. New York: East African Publishing House.
- Biginagwa, T. J. 2012. ‘Historical archaeology of the nineteenth-century caravan trade in northeastern Tanzania: a zooarchaeological perspective’. PhD diss., University of York.
- Blench, R. 2010. ‘Evidence for the Austronesian voyages in the Indian Ocean’. In *The Global Origins and Development of Seafaring*, edited by A. Anderson, J. Barrett and K. Boyle,

- 239–48. Cambridge: McDonald Institute.
- Boland, H. T., Scaglia, G., Notter, D. R., Rook, A. J., Swecker, W. S. and Abaye, A. O. 2011. 'Grazing behavior and diet preference of beef steers grazing adjacent monocultures of tall fescue and alfalfa II: the role of novelty'. *Crop Science* 51: 1815–23.
- Boonman, G. 1983. *East Africa's Grasses and Fodders: Their Ecology and Husbandry*. New York: Springer.
- Bovill, W. 1917. 'Notes from East Africa: the Uluguru mountains and the Rufiji plain'. *The Geographical Journal* 50 (4): 277–83.
- Brett, E. A. 1973. *Colonialism and Underdevelopment in East Africa: The Politics of Economic Change, 1919–1939*. London: Heinemann.
- Brewin, D. R. 1965. 'Kilimanjaro agriculture'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 64: 115–17.
- Brock, B. 1966. 'The Nyiha of Mbozi'. *Tanzania Notes and Records* 65: 1–30.
- Brockington, D., Duffy, R. and Igoe, J. 2008. *Nature Unbound: Conservation, Capitalism and the Future of Protected Areas*. London: Earthscan.
- Burgess, N. D. and Clarke, G. P. (Eds) 2000. *The Coastal Forests of Eastern Africa*. Gland: IUCN.
- Burgess, N. D., Clarke, G. P. and Rodgers, W. A. 1998. 'Coastal forests of Eastern Africa: status, species endemism and its possible causes'. *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society* 64: 337–67.
- Chittick, H. N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Clarke, G. P. 1998. 'A new regional centre of endemism in Africa'. In *Aspects of the Ecology, Taxonomy, and Chorology of the Floras of Africa and Madagascar*, edited by D. F. Cutler, C. R. Huxley and J. M. Lock, 53–65. Kew: Royal Botanical Gardens.
- Crofts, R. A. 1959. *Zanzibar Clove Industry: Statement of Government Policy and Report*. Zanzibar: Zanzibar Protectorate.
- Crowther, A., Horton, M., Kotarba-Morley, A., Prendergast, M., Quintana Morales, E., Wood, M., *et al.* 2014. 'Iron Age agriculture, fishing and trade in the Mafia Archipelago, Tanzania: new evidence from Ukunju Cave'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 49 (1): 21–44.
- Crowther, A., Lucas, L., Helm, R., Horton, M., Shipton, C., Wright, H. T., *et al.* 2016. 'Ancient crops provide first archaeological signature of the westward Austronesian expansion'. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 113 (24): 6635–40, doi:10.1073/pnas.1522714113.
- D'Andrea, A. 2008. 'T'ef (*Eragrostis tef*) in ancient agricultural systems of highland Ethiopia'. *Economic Botany* 62 (4): 547–66.
- Darwall, W. and Guard, M. 2000. 'Southern Tanzania'. In *Coral Reefs of the Indian Ocean: Their Ecology and Preservation*, edited by T. R. McClanahan, C. R. C. Sheppard and D. O. Obura, 131–65. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Dumont, B., Petit, M. and D'Hour, P. 1995. 'Choice of sheep and cattle between vegetative and reproductive cocksfoot patches'. *Applied Animal Behavioral Sciences* 43: 1–15.
- Dunbar, R. B., Wellington, G. M., Colgan, M. W. and Glynn, P. W. 1994. 'Eastern Pacific sea surface temperature since 1600 AD: the oxygen 18 record of climate variability in Galápagos corals'. *Paleoceanography* 9: 291–315.
- Feierman, S. 1990. *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

p.360

- Fleisher, J. and LaViolette, A. 2013. 'The early Swahili trade village of Tumbe, Pemba Island, Tanzania, AD 600–950'. *Antiquity* 87 (338): 1151–68.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1965. *The French at Kilwa Island: An Episode in Eighteenth-Century East African History*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1975. *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the First to the Earlier Nineteenth Century*, 2nd Ed. London: Collins.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1988. *The Swahili Coast, 2nd to 19th Centuries: Islam, Christianity and Commerce in Eastern Africa*. London: Variorum Reprints.
- Fuller, D. Q. 2004. 'Early Kushite agriculture: archaeobotanical evidence from Kawa'. *Sudan & Nubia Bulletin* 8: 70–4.
- Fuller, D., Boivin, N., Hoogervorst, T. and Allaby, R. 2011. 'Across the Indian Ocean: the prehistoric movement of plants and animals'. *Antiquity* 85: 544–58.
- Gerbault, P., Allaby, R. G., Boivin, N., Rudzinski, A., Grimaldi, I. M., Pires, J. C., *et al.* 2014. 'Storytelling and story testing in domestication'. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 111 (17): 6159–64, doi:10.1073/pnas.1400425111.
- Giblin, J. and Fuller, D. Q. 2011. 'First and second millennium AD agriculture in Rwanda: archaeobotanical finds and radiocarbon dates from seven sites'. *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* 20: 253–65.
- Giblin, J. and Monson, J. (Eds) 2010. *Maji-Maji: Lifting the Fog of War*. Leiden: Brill.
- Hastenrath, S. 1991. 'Climate Dynamics of the Tropics'. *Atmospheric Sciences Library* 8: 347–73. Kluwer: Boston.
- Hastenrath, S. and Greischar, L. 1993. 'Changing predictability of Indian monsoon rainfall anomalies'. *Earth and Planetary Sciences* 102 (1): 35–47.
- Hawthorn, W. D. 1993. 'East African coastal forest botany'. In *Biogeography and Ecology of the Rain Forests of Eastern Africa*, edited by J. C. Lovett and S. K. Wasser, 57–99. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Helm, R., Crowther, A., Shipton, C., Tengeza, A., Fuller, D. and Boivin, N. 2012. 'Exploring agriculture, interaction and trade on the Eastern African littoral: preliminary

- results from Kenya'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 47 (1): 39–63.
- Hitchcock, E. F. 1959. 'The sisal industry of East Africa'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, 52.
- Hoogervorst, T. 2013. 'If only plants could talk . . .: reconstructing pre-modern biological translocations in the Indian Ocean'. In *The Sea, Identity, and History: From the Bay of Bengal to the South China Sea*, edited by S. Chandra and H. Prabha Ray, 67–92. Manohar: New Delhi.
- Horton, M. C. 1994. 'Closing the corridor: archaeological and architectural evidence for emerging Swahili regional autonomy'. In *Continuity and Autonomy in Swahili Communities: Inland Influences and Strategies of Self-Determination*, edited by D. Parkin, 15–21. London: School of Oriental and African Studies.
- Horton, M. and Middleton, J. (2000) *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. Malden: Blackwell.
- Huang, W. D., Phojoenen, V. and Johansson, S. 2003. 'Species diversity, forest structure and species composition in Tanzanian tropical forests'. *Forest Ecological Management* 173: 11–24.
- Hurst, D. 2003. *On Westernism: An Ideology's Bid for World Dominion*. Reading: G. Hartley and Co.
- Illius, A. W., Gordon, I. J. and Elston, D. A. 1999. 'Diet selection in goats: a test of intake-rate maximization'. *Ecology* 80: 1008–18.
- Kabuye, C. 1991. 'The importance of multidisciplinary work on the transition and development of agriculture in East Africa'. In *Origins and Development of Agriculture in East Africa: The Ethnosystems Approach to the Study of Early Food Production in Kenya*, edited by R. E. Leakey and L. J. Slikkerveer, 215–17. Ames: Iowa State University.
- Kirsopp, G. D. 1926. *Committee Appointed to Discuss the Rationalization of the Clove Industry*. Zanzibar: Government Report.
- Klee, M., Zach, B. and Neumann, K. 2000. 'Four thousand years of plant exploitation in the Chad Basin of Northeast Nigeria I: the archaeobotany of Kursakata'. *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* 9: 223–37.
- Logan, A. L. 2013. 'Cha(lle)nging our questions: towards an archaeology of food security'. *SAA Archaeological Record* 13 (5): 20–3.
- Marshall, L. W. 2011. 'Fugitive slaves and community creation in 19th-century Kenya: an archaeological and historical investigation of *Watoro* villages'. PhD diss., University of Virginia.
- Marshland, H. 1938. 'Mlau cultivation in the Rufiji Valley'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 5: 56–9.

- McParland, H. and Walshaw, S. 2015. 'Swahili plant use and activity areas at Songo Mnara, Tanzania: a case study at macro and micro scales'. In *Società dei Naturalisti e Matematici di Modena*, 193–5. Suppl. Vol CXLVI. Proceedings of the IWAA8.
- Middleton, J. 1961. *Land Tenure in Zanzibar*. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office.
- Ojany, F. F. and Ogendo, R. B. 1973. *Kenya: A Study in Physical and Human Geography*. Nairobi: Longman.
- Pawlowicz, M. 2011. 'Finding their place in the Swahili world: an archaeological exploration of southern Tanzania'. PhD diss., University of Virginia.
- Pawlowicz, M., Stoetzel, J. and Macko, S. 2014. 'Environmental archaeology at Mikindani, Tanzania: towards a historical ecology of the southern Swahili coast'. *Journal of African Archaeology* 12 (2): 119–39.
- Pike, A. 1938. 'Soil conservation amongst the Matengo Tribe'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 6: 79–82.
- Pikirayi, I. 2015. 'The future of archaeology in Africa'. *Antiquity* 89: 531–41.
- Prins, E. and Clarke, G. P. 2006. 'Discovery and enumeration of Swahilian coastal forests in Lindi region, Tanzania, using landsat TM data analysis'. *Biodiversity and Conservation* 16: 1551–65.
- Pritchard, J. M. 1975. *A Geography of East Africa*. London: Evans Brothers.
- Russell, E. W. 1977. *The Natural Resources of East Africa*. Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau.
- Schmit, H. 2010. "“Deadly silence predominates in this district”: the Maji Maji War and its aftermath in Ungoni". In *Maji Maji: Lifting the Fog of War*, edited by J. Giblin and J. Monson, 183–219. Leiden: Brill.
- Sheriff, A. 1987. *Slaves, Spices, & Ivory in Zanzibar: Integration of an East African Commercial Empire into the World Economy, 1770–1873*. London: James Currey.
- Shetler, J. B. 2007. *Imagining Serengeti: A History of Landscape Memory in Tanzania from Earliest Times to the Present*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Shipton, C., Helm, R., Boivin, N., Crowther, A., Austin, P. and Fuller, D. Q. 2013. 'Intersections, networks and the genesis of social complexity on the Nyali coast of East Africa'. *The African Archaeological Review* 30 (4): 427–53.
- Sinclair, P. 1991. 'Archaeology in eastern Africa: an overview of current chronological issues'. *Journal of African History* 32: 179–219.
- Stoetzel, J. 2014. 'Towards a Swahili historical ecology: phytolith-based analysis in coastal eastern Africa since AD 600'. PhD diss., University of Virginia.
- Strandes, J. 1961. *The Portuguese Period in East Africa*. Edited by J. S. Kirkman. Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau.
- Stump, D. 2010. "“Ancient and backward or long-lived and sustainable?” The role of the past in debates concerning rural livelihoods and resource conservation in eastern Africa".

World Development 38 (9): 1251–62.

- Sulas, F. and Madella, M. 2012. 'Archaeology at the micro-scale: micromorphology and phytoliths at a Swahili stonetown'. *Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences* 4 (2): 145–59.
- Walshaw, S. 2005. 'Swahili trade, urbanization, and food production: botanical perspectives from Pemba Island, Tanzania, AD 700–1500'. PhD diss., Washington University in St. Louis.
- Walshaw, S. 2010. 'Converting to rice: urbanization, Islamization and crops on Pemba Island, Tanzania AD 700–1500'. *World Archaeology* 42 (1): 137–53.
- Walshaw, S. 2015a. 'Cooking and crafting at Songo Mnara, Tanzania (14th–15th C): evidence from macrobotanicals'. In *Società dei Naturalisti e Matematici di Modena*, 121–3. Suppl. Vol CXLVI. Proceedings of the IWAA8.
- Walshaw, S. 2015b. *Swahili Trade, Urbanization, and Food Production: Botanical Perspectives from Pemba Island, Tanzania, ad 700–1500*. BAR: Cambridge Monographs in African Archaeology. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Wescott, N. 1984. 'The East African sisal industry, 1929–1949: the marketing of a colonial commodity during depression and war'. *Journal of African History* 25 (4): 445–61.
- Wetterstrom, W. and Wright, H. T. 2007. 'Appendix C: a contribution to the paleoethnobotany of the Central Highlands of Madagascar'. In *Early State Formation in Central Madagascar: An Archaeological Survey of Western Avaradrano*, edited by H. T. Wright, 281–8. Ann Arbor: Museum Memoirs 43.
- White, F. 1983. *The Vegetation of Africa, a Descriptive Memoir to Accompany the UNESCO/AETFAT/UNSO Vegetation Map of Africa*. Paris: UNESCO.
- p.362
- Wolf, E. R. 1982. *Europe and the People Without History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Wright, H. T. 1984. 'Early seafarers of the Comoro Islands: the Dembeni Phase of the IXth–Xth centuries AD'. *Azania* 19: 13–59.
- Wright, H. T. 1992. 'Early Islam, oceanic trade and town development on Nzwani: the Comorian Archipelago in the XIth–XVth centuries AD'. *Azania* 27: 111–14.
- Wright, H. T. 1993. 'Trade and politics on the eastern littoral of Africa, AD 800–1300'. In *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns*, edited by T. Shaw, P. J. J. Sinclair, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, 658–72. London: Routledge.
- Young, R. and Thompson, G. 1999. 'Missing plant foods? Where is the archaeobotanical evidence for sorghum and finger millet in East Africa?' In *The Exploitation of Plant Resources in Ancient Africa*, edited by M. van der Veen, 63–72. New York: Kluwer/Plenum.
- Zinke, J., Pfeiffer, M., Timm, O., Dullo, W. C. and Davies, G. R. 2005. 'Atmosphere-ocean dynamics in the western Indian Ocean recorded in corals'. *Philosophical Transactions*

of the Royal Society 363: 121–42.

Trade and connectivity

34

THE PROGRESSIVE INTEGRATION OF EASTERN AFRICA INTO AN AFRO-EURASIAN WORLD- SYSTEM, FIRST–FIFTEENTH CENTURIES CE

Philippe Beaujard

Long-distance trade, along with the exchange of knowledge, beliefs and values, has always been a crucial factor for social change. At the beginning of the Common Era, the occurrence of regular and significant exchanges and interconnections between maritime and terrestrial routes combined to build what can be considered as the first *world-system*. It included Asia as well as parts of Europe and Africa (Beaujard 2005, 2012), the Indian Ocean occupying a central position. Although Wallerstein (1974) introduced it for the modern period, the concept of world-system has been employed by many other authors to refer to more ancient periods. A world-system can be defined as a space where exchanges lead to a process of globalisation, marked by a division of labour and hierarchisation occurring both between and within interconnected regions. This process is also characterised by the existence of economic and political cycles, with each cycle experiencing phases of growth and demise.

In this chapter, I will attempt to demonstrate that the eastern African coast, curiously absent in analyses by Chaudhuri (1985) and Abu-Lughod (1989), nonetheless once formed a periphery, and then a semi-periphery – a region occupying an intermediary position between dominant cores and, usually, dominated peripheries – of the Afro-Eurasian world-system, where it played an active role.

The emergence of a pre-Swahili culture (first–sixth century CE)

Although eastern Africa has long been connected to an Indian Ocean sphere of interaction

(Boivin *et al.* 2013; Boivin and Crowther, this volume), sustained participation in networks of trade is found first in the pre-Swahili period, within the context of the incipient Afro-Eurasian world-system that formed in the first century ce. A guide for merchants and sailors entitled the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, written c. 40 CE by an anonymous Greek, reveals the emergence of a pre-Swahili culture on the eastern African coast during this period.

p.366

Bantu farmers reached the coast (Tanzania) during the first century CE. There is archaeological evidence for the spread of Kwale pottery, characteristic of the Early Iron Age, soon thereafter, from Barawa (Somalia) to southern Mozambique (Sinclair 1991), as well as to the Comoros (Chami 2009: 125; Wright, this volume). This spread may have been related to Bantu migrations, but also to the adoption by local groups of newly imported technologies (agriculture, iron working). These diffusions are partly linked to the worldwide development of trade.

According to the *Periplus*, an area called the ‘Cape of Spices’ on the Horn of Africa received cassia and cinnamon, transported by seafarers who may have been Austronesians (see Pliny, Book XII, para. XLII–XLIII). The *Periplus* also mentions the port of Opônê, where ‘better-quality slaves’ were found, ‘the greater number of which go to Egypt’, and ‘tortoise shell in great quantity’; slaves and tortoise shell probably came from further south on the coast. A slave trade therefore already existed during this period. Opônê corresponds to the site of Ras Hafun, which has yielded Egyptian and Parthian potteries (150 bce–early first millennium CE), and later on, Indian and Partho-Sassanid ceramics (100–500 CE) (Smith and Wright 1988).

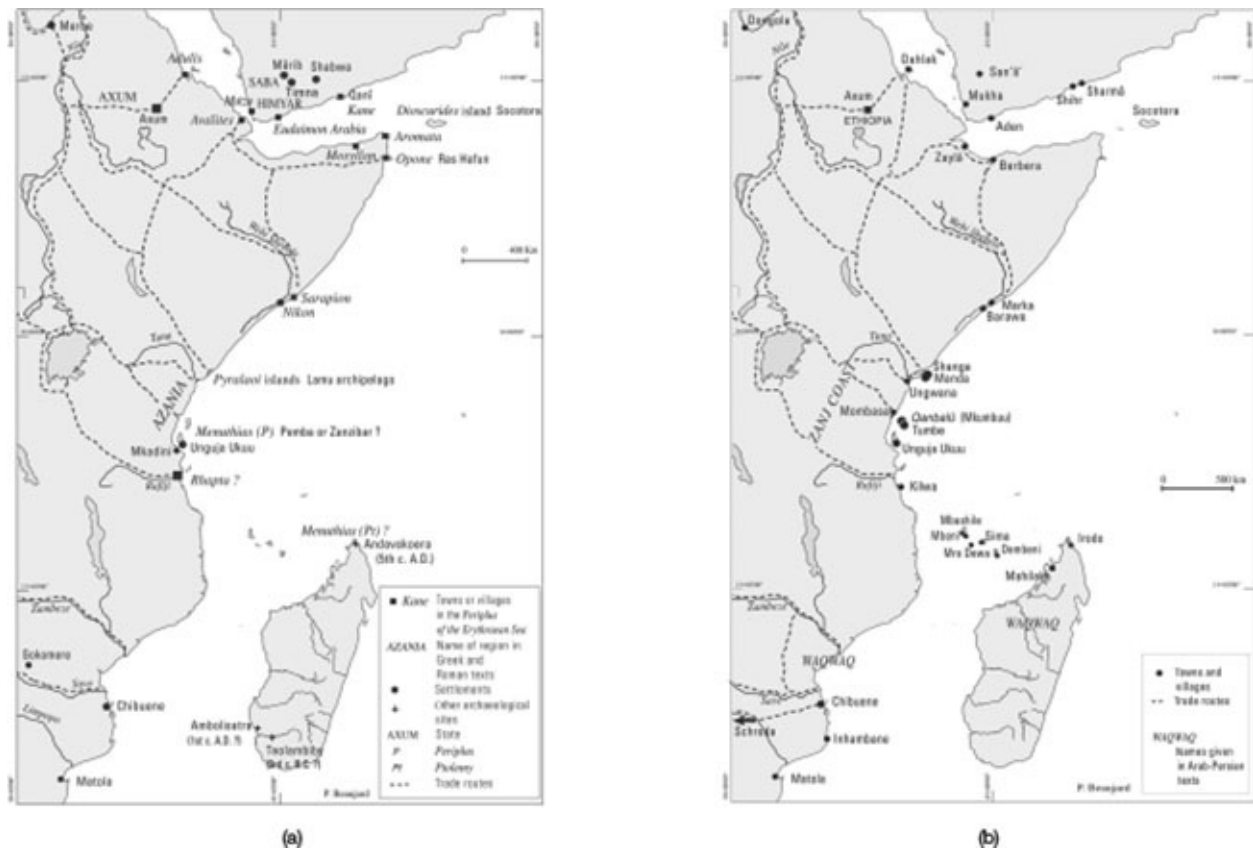
Further south, the *Periplus* mentions the Pyralae islands (Lamu Archipelago), Menuthias (Zanzibar?) and finally an *emporium* called Rhapta, ‘the very last market-town of the continent of Azania’, which may have been located at the mouth of the Rufiji river. The term ‘Azania’ is perhaps related to the Arabic and Persian Zanj or Zang, which referred, until the thirteenth century, to the eastern African coast and its (black) people. The name Rhapta refers to ‘sewn boats’, and derives from the Arabic *rabta*, ‘to tie’. ‘Each port of trade is administered by its own chief’ (Casson 1989: 59): i.e. (proto-) city-states may have been already present along the coast. Rhapta is described as a tributary of a Yemeni king who controlled the port of Muza. Arabs went to Rhapta to trade and married African women there: ‘The merchants of Muza [. . .] send out to it merchant craft that they staff mostly with Arab skippers and agents who, through continual intercourse and intermarriage, are familiar with the area and its language’ (Casson 1989: 61). Here we already observe a cosmopolitan society, a feature characteristic of these ‘fringe cultures’, which began to develop along the shores of the Indian Ocean. Rhapta exported ivory, rhinoceros horn and tortoise shell (*Periplus* paras 16 and 17). The main imports at the Azanian markets were glass objects, as well as iron tools and weapons.

Ancient texts show that ships from the Roman world frequented the coast, although no archaeological evidence of this has yet surfaced. It seems likely that Roman knowledge extended to the islands off the coast. Pliny (VI, 152) mentions '*Regio Amithoscatta, Damnia, Mizi maiores et minores, Drimati*', that have been interpreted respectively as being 'Madagascar, Domoni (on Ndzuwani island), the Vamizi islands (northern Mozambique) and Tanzania's Mrima coast' (Martin 2010).

Ptolemy's *Geography* (second century CE) shows improved knowledge of the eastern African coast; this could reflect an increased 'Roman' presence. Rhapta is the only place that is called *metropolis*. Moreover, the Menuthias island, in Ptolemy's *Geography*, is located southeast of Cape Prason (Cape Delgado), and may refer to Madagascar.

Parthian, Sassanid, Ptolemaic, Roman, Axumite and Byzantine coins have been discovered on the coast and in the interior, but never in secured stratigraphic contexts (Horton 1993: 446ff.). Although the circumstances of the findings remain dubious, their number and location (notably in Zimbabwe) would seem significant.

New coastal sites appeared in the period between 300 and 600, with Zanzibar and its region acquiring particular importance. The site of Unguja Ukuu has yielded artefacts dated between the fifth and seventh centuries imported from India, western Asia and the Roman world (Juma 2004: 107, this volume). Following the decline of the Roman empire from the third century onward, and then of Aksum during the sixth century, Arab and Persian merchants were probably the most active foreigners on the African coast, with Sassanid Persia playing a leading role in the western Indian Ocean. The presence of Chinese stoneware, its dates still to be confirmed, at Unguja Ukuu could reflect Sassanid Persian links with China.



[Figure 34.1](#) (a) Map of East Africa, first–sixth centuries; (b) Map of East Africa, seventh–tenth centuries

There is archaeological evidence for the existence of various sites predating the Islamic period. Examples are Manda (Manda Island, fifth century, Kusimba *et al.*, this volume) and Shanga (Pate Island, sixth century; Horton, this volume) on the Kenyan coast, Mkadini, Kunduchi and Kaole on the Tanzanian coast facing Zanzibar (Figure 34.1a; all maps presented here are updates from Beaujard 2012).

The connections between African ports and oceanic networks had a linguistic impact. The spread of Kwale pottery may have coincided partially with the expansion of speakers of Proto-North-East Coast languages (PNEC). The advance of these people along the Kenyan coast may have triggered the formation of the Sabaki languages before the mid-first millennium (Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993: 491–3; Spear 2000: 258, 271). Among the innovations of PNEC languages, terms such as **mupunga*, ‘rice’, and perhaps **kitamba(la)*, ‘textile’ may be connected to oceanic trade (Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993: 288–9). In Proto-Sabaki, between 350 and 650 CE, more borrowings appeared from languages of the Indian Ocean: **mbalazi*, ‘pigeon pea’ (*Cajanus cajan* [L.] Millsp.; both the plant and its name are of Indian origin), **mpula*, ‘steel’ (*cf.* Persian *pulad*, Hindi *faulad*), **nkamba*, ‘rope’ (Persian *kanaba*), **popoo*, ‘Areca nut’ (Persian *pupal*, Arabic and Hindi *faufal*), **tambulu*, ‘betel’ (Persian *tambuul*, Arabic *tanbul*, Hindi *tambol*). The term **kilazi*,

‘potato’ [sic] (= tuber, yam?) seems to be another loanword, from Tamil *kilari*, ‘to dig out’ – a word that yielded *keladi*, ‘taro’ in Malay.

The birth of Swahili culture (seventh–tenth century CE)

The world-system was affected by climatic changes, famines and epidemics during parts of the fifth and sixth centuries (Mann *et al.* 2008; Beaujard 2012; Brook 2014: 348). During the seventh century an economic upturn coincided with a general rise in temperatures and an increase in precipitation in both the Indian Ocean and northern China. This upturn favoured progress in production and exchanges, accompanied by the founding of and interconnection between the Tang and Muslim empires. A Swahili culture influenced by Islam took root on the eastern African coast; the name Swahili was from the Arabic *sawâhil* (plural), ‘coasts’; *sahel* (singular) meant ‘warehouse, outpost’. Acting as an interface between dominant regions (Arabia, Persia, Egypt, India) and peripheries and margins that were terrestrial (the African hinterland) or maritime (the Comoros and Madagascar), the eastern African littoral developed progressively into a semi-periphery of the system, with mercantile centres and elites monopolising all contacts with external networks (*infra*) (Figure 34.1b). The Lamu Archipelago (with the sites of Shanga and Manda) and more importantly Pemba Island (LaViolette, this volume) were active in the exchange networks, while at the same time yielding the first mosques known on the coast (dated to the eighth century; Horton 2001: 454).

Trade links were established first with Oman and the Persian Gulf, but Indians probably played a role that remains underevaluated (Hawkes and Wynne-Jones 2015). The Arab geographer Mas‘ûdî (tenth century) emphasised the involvement of the Omanis in exchanges with the eastern African coast, notably Pemba:

The sailors of Oman sail across this gulf to reach the island of Qanbalû, located in the sea of the Zanj ... [site of Ras Mkumbuu, west coast of Pemba].

p.369

Among the inhabitants of the island of Qanbalû is a community of Muslims, now speaking the language of the Zanj, who conquered this island and subjected all the Zanj on it.

(Mas‘ûdî 1962, t. 1: 93, 84.)

Mas‘ûdî notes the export of ivory, but the slave trade was also flourishing at least until what is known as the Zanj revolt in Iraq in 868; it should be noted that ‘Zanj’ first refers to eastern Africans from Kenya to Mozambique, but the insurgents were not all black slaves from the Swahili coast (Sheriff 2005: 15, 18). Muslim networks carried African slaves as far as Indonesia and China (Chinese chronicles mention the sending of *sengki* [zangi] or *sengzhi* [zanji] slaves to the Chinese court from the kingdoms of Java and Sumatra). Free Africans have also been mentioned at Sîrâf towards the end of the first

millennium (Allen 1993: 186), and eastern African pottery has been excavated in Oman (ninth century) and at Sharma (Hadramawt, tenth–eleventh century). Sharma has also yielded copal from eastern Africa (Rougeulle 2004; Rougeulle 2015). These findings reveal that Swahili, free and enslaved, were certainly present at Sharma, and possibly in the Comoros and even Malagasy (part of the copal found may have come from Madagascar). The Zanj coast also exported ambergris, wood, iron and gold (*infra*).

The ceramic tradition called ‘Early Tana Tradition’ (Horton 1996) has been found from Kenya to Mozambique, and in the extreme south of Madagascar (Parker Pearson 2010), revealing the extent of exchange networks. While Horton has noted that this pottery seems to have spread from the area of the Proto-Swahili, its origin remains a matter for debate, and the purported link of its diffusion to the spread of the Swahili language is also in dispute. Moreover, the diffusion of bowls with graphite decoration may reflect an extension of new social practices and structures (Fleisher 2010; Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2011: 271).

The importance of Mozambique is striking for this period. This may be linked to the exploitation of metallic resources (copper, then gold), and to the demand for ivory. Marilee Wood has stressed the abundance of beads imported (from the Persian Gulf) through the site of Chibuene (Ekblom and Sinclair, this volume). These beads were carried as far as Botswana, and seem to point to particular oceanic networks (Sinclair *et al.* 2012). ‘Pre-11th century assemblages from Schroda [Limpopo valley] and Chibuene alone account for over thirty times the total number of glass beads recorded to date from contemporaneous East African sites’ (Wood 2005: 195, this volume). Gold exploitation is first mentioned in Mas‘ûdî’s work, but it probably began in an earlier period: ‘The sea of the Zanj ends with the land of Sofala and the Waq-Waq, which produces gold and many other wonderful things’ (Mas‘ûdî, t. II, 1965: 322–3).

During this period, Waq-Waq in the Arab-Persian manuscripts refers simultaneously to islands of Southeast Asia, Madagascar and the Sofala coast, a fact that may attest to extended Austronesian networks. Indeed, Austronesian travels continued toward the western Indian Ocean, linked to the formation of the thalassocracy of Srîwijaya (southeast Sumatra). Austronesians reached the Comoros and Madagascar around the eighth century. A text from Al-Jahiz (ninth century) evokes ‘naval attacks organised by the ruler of az-Zâbaj [Srîwijaya]’. According to al-Sîrâfi – in a book that was erroneously called *The Book of the Marvels of India* – in 945 CE, the ‘Waq-Waq people’ (probably arriving from Sumatra, mainly to obtain slaves) attacked Qanbalû (Pemba) without success.

Various linguistic innovations during the Proto-Swahili period reflect external contacts, notably *pamba, ‘cotton’, from Persian *panbah*, *musikiti, ‘mosque’, from Arabic *maṣjid* or *masgid*, *idafu, ‘unripe coconut’, from Hindi *dab*, etc. (Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993: 293ff.).

The disintegration of the Tang and the Muslim empires during the ninth and tenth centuries led to a global recession of the world-system and a restructuring of networks. Whereas the influence of the Persian Gulf diminished, Fatimid Egypt and the Red Sea acquired new importance. The same was true for the Indian Muslim port of Daybul (Sind) and the Gujarat region. Demand for products from eastern Africa – notably gold, slaves, ivory and copal – supported economic activity on the Zanj coast as well as an expansion towards the Comoros and Madagascar. The Swahili-Comorian split occurred around the ninth century (Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993: 494). In the Comoros, a mixed culture – Bantu and Austronesian – flourished, called Dembeni after the name of a site on Mayotte (eighth–twelfth century; Allibert *et al.* 1989). Two types of pottery testify to the various influences that helped to form this culture. *Arca* seashell-impressed pottery might be an element related to the Austronesian flow (Wright 1984). The second type of pottery, with red slip and graphite decoration, seems to have links to an African tradition (because there is no source of graphite in the Comoros, graphite would have had to be imported from the coast or from Madagascar). In addition, Tana pottery was imported from the eastern African coast. Moreover, the early layers at Dembeni sites have already yielded ceramics from the Persian Gulf and Chinese pottery, probably carried through the Persian Gulf.

The eastern African towns began building houses, mosques and tombs with carved coral, using a technique that spread to the Comoros and northern Madagascar. Tiny silver coins have been unearthed at Shanga; these would later be imitated in coins from Pemba, Zanzibar, Mafia and Kilwa. An influence of Fatimid Egypt and more importantly of Daybul (Sindh) has been suggested for these coins, which also exhibit local innovative features (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2012).

It is probably during this period that the eastern African boats called *mtepe* (from Arabic *mtafieh*, from *tâf*, ‘to float’) were developed. They were ‘sewn boats’ that belonged to the western oceanic tradition of shipbuilding, while also exhibiting some Indonesian features (Hornell 1934: 322). Transporting coconuts was a taboo for the *mtepe*; this may be related to Indian incursions on the African coast to obtain slaves; eastern African traditions linked to the Wadebuli (‘people of Daybul’) suggest an early Indian involvement in the slave trade (Pouwels 2002: 394, 396). Similar traditions mention Wadiba (‘people of the islands’), a probable reference to Austronesian raids on the coast (*supra*). Indians and Austronesians carried coconuts on their boats (the coconut tree was introduced into Madagascar by Austronesians).

Archaeology and texts reveal contacts between Madagascar, the Comoros and the Muslim world during the ninth and tenth centuries. Bantu migrants settled on the west coast of Madagascar, introducing zebu cattle and African cultivated plants. Chlorite schist and quartz from Madagascar have been excavated in Mayotte, dated to the eighth century; some of these were re-exported to the eastern African coast. The site of Mahilaka (northwestern Madagascar) has yielded ceramics from the Persian Gulf (and Chinese potteries) in its deepest layers (Radimilahy 1998); Ibn Rusteh evokes the import of

Aepyornis eggs, a giant Malagasy bird also mentioned by al-Sîrâfi. Despite these early connections, Madagascar remained a very distant periphery of the world-system at this time, whereas the Comoros were more strongly integrated as shown by the flowering of the Dembeni culture.

Rise and recession of the Swahili culture (tenth–fourteenth century CE)

Starting in the late tenth century, the expansion of the system was bolstered by a global warming during the eleventh–twelfth centuries, accompanied by a strengthening of the monsoon patterns in the Indian Ocean. The rise of the system was also driven by the founding of the Sung empire in China, as well as the dynamism of both India (Chola thalassocracy, Gujarat) and Southeast Asia. The thirteenth century was a period of crisis and change, which witnessed a reshuffling of the Asian continent and the exchange networks, along with the creation of Mongol states in Asia and eastern Europe, the birth of the Sultanate of Delhi in India and the advent of Mamluk rule in Egypt. Islam experienced a new phase of expansion in the Indian Ocean at this time. The world economy peaked during the first decades of the fourteenth century (Beaujard 2012: 152ff; Figure 34.2a).

p.371

The Swahili coast was now fully transformed into an active semi-periphery, especially as of the thirteenth century. While importing goods from the cores, the Swahili also developed their own manufacturing centres, notably involving textiles: fabrics were exported to the hinterland, the Comoros and Madagascar. Islam played an increasing role in the settlements. The coastal expansion of Islam was clearly linked to increasing urbanisation and trade. As was the case in West Africa, ‘a spate of conversions provided a political answer to competition between [cities]’ (Fauvelle-Aymar 2013: 101) and marked the ideological and economic domination of the Muslim world. The Shirazi myth partly reflects this expansion (cf. Pouwels 1987: 10–21, 35–37; on the Shirazi, cf. Horton and Middleton 2000: 52ff.). The Shirazi (‘people of Shiraz’) were Swahili from the Lamu Archipelago who migrated to the south, spreading Islam (the *Kilwa Chronicle* relates the settlement of a ‘Shirazi’ dynasty on this island, Horton and Middleton 2000: 52ff.). A Persian influence is most noticeable, however, under the Buyids (tenth–eleventh centuries) – as well as later in the fifteenth century. Horton has linked the Shirazi to mosques with decorated *mihirabs* made of carved coral, bearing Kufic inscriptions (Kizimkazi [Zanzibar] [1107] . . .) (Horton and Middleton 2000: 59–61). It also should be noted that the Chinese chronicle *Sungshi* (History of the Sung) mentions the ruler of Cengtân (=Zangistân), who sent an embassy to China in 1071, with the title *A-mei lo A-mei lan*, a transcription of the title ‘Amîr-i-amîrân’ used by the Buyids. Adapted to African

beliefs, Islam was by then present in settlements of all sizes, in its various currents. Data show the diversity and fluidity of religious affiliations, which coincided with political strategies. Sunnis, Shi'ites and Khârijites-Ibadis were present (Wilkinson 1981: 272–305; Horton and Middleton 2000: 67; Horton 2001: 463). It has been suggested that Qarmatians from Bahrain and Ibadis from Oman influenced the *waungwana* 'collective patriciate' of the northern Swahili city-states, which developed in opposition to the Shirazi royal system, itself characterised by a more hierarchised society and the possession of regalia (Allen 1993: 201, 203). This opposition may prove to be too simplistic and anachronistic, however. The *waungwana* system may have developed only later, between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries, from Pate and Lamu (Pouwels 1987: 10–21, 35–7). However, the Arab geographer Yâqût notes for thirteenth-century Mogadishu, 'They have no king but their affairs are regulated by elders' (cited in Trimingham 1964: 6).

One characteristic of the Swahili world (at least in its northern part), was the existence of so-called 'stonetowns'. These were inhabited by patricians and developed in opposition to, but also in conjunction with 'rural settlements', clientelist and kinship networks linking patricians and rural inhabitants. New contexts led to the de-urbanisation of some centres such as Unguja Ukuu on Zanzibar, Tumbe on Pemba and Chibuene in Mozambique (LaViolette and Fleisher 2009; Fleisher *et al.* 2015), whereas other cities and new settlements flourished. Starting in the tenth century, an increasing number of bowls, both imported and locally produced, may reflect the emerging importance of competitive feasting, demonstrating 'largesse of wealth and power accumulated' (Fleisher 2010: 200).

Swahili expansion benefited not only from the trade boom in the Indian Ocean, but also from African internal developments. The cities developed agriculture, craftsmanship and fishing, a process that went hand in hand with increasing socio-complexity. Strong connections remained with the Persian Gulf, but the Red Sea was probably preeminent under the Fatimids and the Ayyûbids, with Yemen playing a role of hub between various spaces. The Yemeni Mahdali dynasty seized power at Kilwa during the thirteenth century and developed its trade. The black-on-yellow ceramic found on the coast, in the Comoros and Madagascar, reveals the involvement of Yemeni networks in the exchanges from 1250 on, which in turn highlights the importance of Yemen under the Rasûlid dynasty. This Yemeni influence was accompanied by the settling of sharifian lineages, and a strengthening of Sunni Islam.

p.372

Along with Arab-Persians, Indians traded and settled on the eastern African coast. Around 1030 CE, al-Bîrûnî writes: '[The port of] Somanâth [Gujarat] has become so successful because it is [. . .] a stopping point for people travelling between Sofala and the Zanj country and China' (Ferrand 1907: 552).

Idrîsî (twelfth century) mentions the presence of Indians at Shiyûna at the mouth of the Zambezi River (perhaps Sena). During the early thirteenth century, Chinese writer Zhao

Rugua noted that, each year, the ports of Gujarat and Arabia sent ships to Zanzibar, carrying cotton fabrics, copper and porcelain. Indian pottery and beads have been excavated at Manda. As for the fourteenth century, Indian ceramics have been found notably on Tumbatu (northern Zanzibar). Indian craftsmen probably allowed for technological transfers in bead production and in the textile industry (Horton 1996: 418). Sites in Zanzibar and Pemba have yielded Indian and Chinese coins. Indians certainly carried some eastern ceramics to Africa and Madagascar (Mahilaka); these are being found in increasing number in these regions, particularly dating from the thirteenth century. Ceramics, however, also came through ports of the Persian Gulf such as Qays and Hormuz.

The Chinese were themselves active in the Indian Ocean during the southern Sung and the Yuan periods; they may have reached the African coast, and perhaps Madagascar, probably from Java. Chinese chronicles mention African products imported into China at that time: ivory, aromatic gums, yellow sandalwood from ‘Zangibâr’ (from Madagascar?), tortoiseshell and slaves (Hirth and Rockhill 1911).

Two city-states were then preeminent on the eastern African coast: Mogadishu in the north and Kilwa in the south. In particular, from the thirteenth century onward, Kilwa’s control of the gold trade from the Sofala coast gave it unrivaled negotiating powers with foreign traders. At the beginning of the fourteenth century the Sultan of Kilwa issued coins (Pallaver, this volume) with a trimetallic system (Mogadishu was probably the only other city minting coins during the fourteenth century). Kilwa’s expansion was linked to the emergence of chiefdoms and country-states in southeastern Africa (Schroda [ninth–tenth centuries], Bambandyanalo [c. 1010–1220], Mapungubwe [c. 1220–1280], then Great Zimbabwe [thirteenth–fifteenth centuries]). This occurred in the region of the Limpopo river, in connection with gold exploitation and ivory export on the one hand, and the rise of regional exchanges and stockbreeding, on the other. New types of beads in this region signal changes in the oceanic networks. Beads of the Zhizo series (Schroda, Chibuene) may have come from the Persian Gulf (Iran?); the beads from Bambandyanalo, of the Indo-Pacific type, would have been imported from the Coromandel coast, and perhaps (prior to the thirteenth century) from Southeast Asia (Wood, this volume). The beads of Mapungubwe probably originated in Gujarat. The origin of the beads of the ‘Great Zimbabwe series’ is more uncertain (India, or Southeast Asia?) (Robertshaw *et al.* 2010, Wood 2011).

The Lamu Archipelago remained an important hub for transregional trade (Manda, Shanga), as did Pemba (Chwaka, Mtambwe Mkuu), Zanzibar (Kizimkazi, Mkokotoni), Tumbatu (Jongwe), Mafia (Kisimani Mafia), Sanje ya Kati (near Kilwa), and the coastal cities of Gedi, Ungwana, Kaole and Mombasa.

The Swahili cities co-evolved with the cores of the world-system – they benefited from (limited) technological transfers and, to a certain extent, from their increased integration

in the Muslim world. This co-evolution went along with the exploitation of the environment and of larger geographic and social peripheries, in the interior of Africa and the islands of the Comoros and Madagascar. The dominance of the Swahili city-states was based on the desirability of manufactured products, on their political and ideological powers, and on various strategies (for example, alliance building) (Beaujard 2013). The peripheries mainly provided raw goods and men, and received articles that were in part produced on the coast, since the Swahili restricted the diffusion of goods imported from abroad. Textiles played a crucial role in building clientelist networks that allowed for exchanges between the coast and hinterland; textiles were imported, or locally produced, especially at Mogadishu and Kilwa. Moreover, the Swahili never attempted to spread Islam to the interior, but rather expressly ‘kept [it] as a coastal monopoly’ (Horton and Middleton 2000: 90). The Shirazi myths relating the purchase of Kilwa island clearly illustrate the importance of textiles and its link to Islam. The slave trade remained significant, on the African coast and later on in the Comoros and Madagascar. Idrîsî describes raids led by people from Qays (Persian Gulf) to obtain slaves. Al-Bîrûnî alludes to the export of eastern African slaves to Sind and India. At the beginning of the twelfth century, most of the wealthy people at Canton owned black slaves; in 1225, Zhao Rugua signals African men-at-arms aboard Chinese junks, and Ibn Battûta (1982: 186, 209) evokes the presence of Habashî (‘Abyssinians’) aboard Indian ships and on Chinese junks departing from Calicut; he also notes in 1355 that black servants were employed as guards in Chinese cities.

Swahili ships sailed to the Comoros and Madagascar, where Africans and Arabs continued to migrate. Madagascar also welcomed new Austronesian migrants who contributed to the rise of the town of Vohemar, in the northeast, and of kingdoms developing intensive rice culture. Madagascar was now known as Qumr by the Arab and Persian geographers. Even the extreme south of Madagascar was connected to eastern African networks, as evidenced by the discovery of Islamic and Chinese ceramics. Stone buildings developed in the Comoros (and in Mahilaka) that were influenced by Swahili architecture. There is archaeological evidence of widespread activity in iron metallurgy on Mayotte, perhaps based on servile labour. Idrîsî mentions the export of iron to India (Kusimba 1999: 97ff; cf. Killick 2009: 296), and evokes the travels of Comorians and Malagasy people towards the Sofala coast in search of gold and slaves (Viré 1984: 26, 34). According to Ibn al-Mujâwir (c. 1240), Malagasy ventured as far as Aden well before his time, but during the thirteenth century these voyages had stopped.

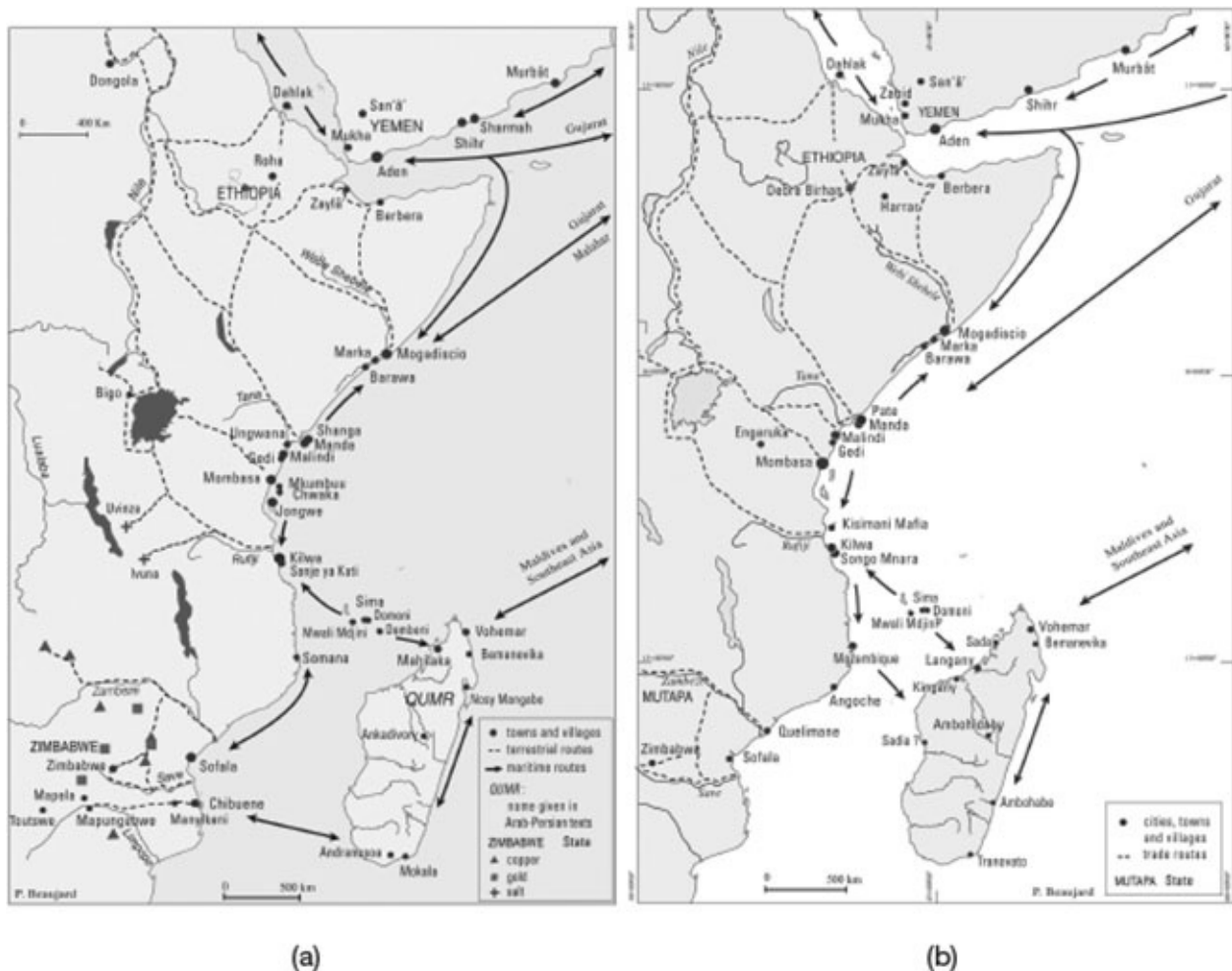
From 1320 to 1330 the world-system experienced a sharp decline, made more intense by a period of global cooling. Moreover, in 1346 a bubonic plague epidemic swept through Asia and the Indian Ocean region, Africa and Europe. The eastern African coast was affected. Kilwa (Wynne-Jones, this volume) experienced a population loss during this period. No Kilwa ruler struck money after 1374. The Great Mosque collapsed during the fourteenth century and was only rebuilt during the fifteenth century. The palace of the sultan, Husuni Kubwa, was abandoned before completion. In Madagascar, the city of

Mahilaka and the South of the island (Androy) experienced drops in population.

The new rise of eastern Africa in the fifteenth century

Following six or seven decades of recession, production and exchange were once again on the upswing by the close of the fourteenth century. This improvement was bolstered not only by the resurgence of China under the Ming dynasty (until its voluntary withdrawal from the international scene in 1433), but also by European dynamism and an expanding Ottoman empire. In the Indian Ocean area, the activity of city-states (Malacca, Calicut, Hormuz) and of large Indian states that had emerged after the collapse of the Delhi sultanate also played a crucial role (Figure 34.2b). A Cambay–Malacca route was established as a major axis in the Indian Ocean.

p.374



[Figure 34.2](#) (a) Map of East Africa, eleventh–fourteenth centuries; (b) Map of East Africa, fifteenth–sixteenth centuries

In eastern Africa, this new phase of growth resulted in a rise in the number and size of towns. Social transformations occurred, in which not only Ibadis (at Pate), but also and more importantly Hadramis may have taken part: the Hadramis were responsible for spreading an orthodox version of Sunni Islam (Allen 1993: 202ff; Horton and Middleton 2000: 61; Vernet 2005). The two bases of power of the stonetowns (long-distance trade and Islam) were visually associated by the insertion of imported bowls and plates (notably from China) into the walls of mosques and tombs. At Kilwa, the Great Mosque was rebuilt. On the Kenyan coast tombs were erected that displayed high pillars, an innovation reflecting a synthesis of traditions of the northern Swahili coast and Egyptian influences.

Although Islamic pottery continued to arrive via the Red Sea and southern Arabia, there was a considerable renewal of contacts with the Persian Gulf. The economic influence of China was also more strongly felt. Ships belonging to the great Chinese fleets, launched in the Indian Ocean from 1403 on, visited Mogadishu, Barawa and Malindi in 1417 and 1422, responding to the envoy of an embassy from Malindi to China in 1415. Large quantities of porcelain (blue-and-white) were now found in many African coastal towns, as well as in the Comoros and Madagascar. This type of pottery was also brought by Persians, Arabs and Indians, along with textiles, Islamic ceramics, glass and agricultural products.

p.375

Regional mutations were noticeable during the mid-fifteenth century, initiated by global cooling and weak monsoons in the Indian Ocean around 1460. In Africa, the state of Great Zimbabwe declined, also for internal reasons. This decline led to a weakening of the coastal city of Kilwa; northern Swahili towns such as Mombasa, Malindi and Pate then rose to pre-eminence.

A new economic rise occurred during the final decades of the fifteenth century, in the Indian Ocean and along the eastern African coast. Gold mining continued in states that succeeded Great Zimbabwe, for example, Mutapa, Butua and Manica. Ivory was still exported, as well as slaves, from eastern Africa but also from the Comoros and Madagascar. The Gujaratis played a significant role in trade, bringing in mainly cotton fabrics and beads, and acquiring most of the Sofala gold.

The rise of the Swahili city-states culture triggered increasing integration of the peripheries of the African coast into the world-system. The maritime networks were connected to routes that went further into the African interior. In Madagascar, whereas Mahilaka (Radimilahy, this volume) declined, a new city was founded at Langany (in the northwest), where caravans from the highlands arrived. In these highlands, the emergence of fortified villages on hilltops shows a clear connection to the importance of the slave trade. A text written by Turkish admiral Piri Re'is (1521) reveals the great scale of the slave trade, for which the Comoros were a stopping point (Allibert 1988). Vohemar (northeast Madagascar) was flourishing at that time, as evidenced by the Chinese imports

found in its cemetery, likely a clue to prolonged contacts with Southeast Asia via the Maldives.

Swahili ships and merchants also crossed the ocean in smaller numbers: in Malacca, the Portuguese Pires mentioned in 1515, ‘people from Kilwa, Malindi, Mogadiscio and Mombasa’.

The formation of a new world-system

The development of capitalism in Europe, along with increased competition between Iberians, Genoese and Venetians, led to a crucial expansion starting near the end of the fifteenth century. In 1498, Christopher Columbus discovered the Americas and, from the sixteenth century on, the European states built a new world-system, along with West Africa and the Americas.

The Portuguese entered the Indian Ocean in 1498, and seized Kilwa and Mombasa in 1505 in an attempt to divert the trade in spices, textiles and gold, and with dreams of ‘freeing’ Jerusalem. The settling of the Portuguese in eastern Africa, at Goa (western India) and later at Malacca and Hormuz only caused temporary disturbances in the exchange networks. The Portuguese presence did not contribute to a weakening of the Swahili city-states culture; rather it led to a reshuffling of the networks benefitting the Lamu Archipelago and more importantly the city of Pate, which could then take advantage of its location at the junction of Portuguese and Arab spheres of interaction (Vernet 2005: 70ff.).

References

- Abu-Lughod, J. 1989. *Before European Hegemony: The World System ad 1250–1350*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Allen, J. de V. 1993. *Swahili Origins: Swahili Culture and the Shungwaya Phenomenon*. London: James Currey.
- Allibert, C. 1988. ‘Une description turque de l’océan Indien au XVI^e siècle: l’océan Indien occidental dans le *Kitab-i-Bahrije* de Piri Re’is’. *Études Océan Indien* 10: 9–47.
- Allibert, C., Argant, A. and Argant, J. 1989. ‘Le site archéologique de Dembeni (Mayotte), Archipel des Comores’. *Études Océan Indien* 11: 61–172.
- Beaujard, P. 2005. ‘The Indian Ocean in Eurasian and African world-systems before the sixteenth century’. *Journal of World History* 16 (4): 411–65.

- Beaujard, P. 2012. *Les Mondes de L'Océan Indien*. Vol. 1: *De la Formation de l'État au Premier Système-monde Afro-Eurasien (4e millénaire av. J.-C.–6e siècle apr. J.-C.)*. Vol. 2: *L'Océan Indien au Cœur des Globalisations de l'Ancien Monde*. Paris: Armand Colin.
- Beaujard, P. 2013. 'Ancient world-systems and processes of domination, coevolution, and resistance: the example of the East African coast before the seventeenth century'. *Actuel Marx* 53: 40–62.
- Boivin, N., Crowther, A., Helm, R. and Fuller, D. Q. 2013. 'East Africa and Madagascar in the Indian Ocean world'. *Journal of World Prehistory* 26: 213–81, doi:10.1007/s10963-013-9067-4.
- Brook, J. L. 2014. *Climate Change and the Course of Global History: A Rough Journey*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Casson, L. 1989. *Periplus Maris Erythraei*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Chami, F. A. (Ed.) 2009. *Zanzibar and the Swahili Coast from c. 30,000 Years Ago*. Dar es Salaam: E & D Vision Publishing Limited.
- Chaudhuri, K. N., 1985. *Trade and Civilization in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fauvelle-Aymar, F.-X. 2013. *Le Rhinocéros d'Or: Histoires du Moyen Âge Africain*. Paris: Alma Édition.
- Ferrand, G. 1907. 'Les îles Râmny, Lâmary, Wâkwâk, Komor des géographes arabes et Madagascar'. *Journal Asiatique* 10: 433–566.
- Fleisher, J. B. 2010. 'Rituals of consumption and the politics of feasting on the eastern African coast, AD 700–1500'. *Journal of World Prehistory*, 23: 195–217.
- Fleisher, J. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2011. 'Ceramics and the early Swahili: deconstructing the Early Tana Tradition'. *African Archaeological Review* 28: 245–78, doi:10.1007/s10437-011-9104-6.
- Fleisher, J., Lane, P., LaViolette, A., Horton, M., Pollard, E., Morales, E. Q., *et al.* 2015. 'When did the Swahili become maritime?' *American Anthropologist* 117 (1): 100–15.
- Hawkes, J. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2015. 'India in Africa: trade goods and connections of the late first millennium'. *Afriques* 6. Available online at: <http://afriques.revues.org>.
- Hirth, F. and Rockhill, W. W. 1911. *Chau-Ju-Kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, Entitled Chu-fan chi*. St Petersburg: Printing Office of the Imperial Academy of Sciences.
- Hornell, J. 1934. 'Indonesian influence on East African culture'. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 64: 305–32.
- Horton, M. C. 1993. 'Swahili architecture, space and social structure'. In *Architecture and Order*, edited by M. Parker Pearson and C. Richards, 147–69. London: Routledge.
- Horton, M. C. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.

- Horton, M. 2001. 'The Islamic conversion of the Swahili coast 750–1500: some archaeological and historical evidence'. In *Islam in East Africa: New Sources*, edited by B. S. Amoretti, 449–69. Rome: Herder.
- Horton, M. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili*. London: Blackwell.
- Ibn Battûta 1982. *Voyages. T. II: De La Mecque aux Steppes Russes. T. III: Inde, Extrême-Orient, Espagne et Soudan*. Paris: F. Maspéro.
- Juma, A. M. 2004. *Unguja Ukuu on Zanzibar: An Archaeological Study of Early Urbanism*. Uppsala: Studies in Global Archaeology 3.
- Killick, D. 2009. 'Agency, dependency and long-distance trade: East Africa and the Islamic World, ca. 700–1500 CE.' In *Politics and Power: Archaeological Perspectives on the Landscapes of Early States*, edited by S. Falconer and C. Redman, 179–207. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1999. *The Rise and Fall of Swahili States*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- LaViolette, A. and Fleisher, J. 2009. 'The urban history of a rural place: Swahili archaeology on Pemba Island, Tanzania, 700–1500 AD'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 42 (3): 433–55.
- Mann, M. E., Zhang, Z., Hughes, M. K., Bradley, R. S., Miller, S. K., Rutherford, S. and Ni, F. 2008. 'Proxy-based reconstructions of hemispheric and global surface temperature variations over the past two millennia'. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 105: 13252–7.
- Martin, N. 2010. 'Les productions céramiques de l'océan Indien occidental: implications culturelles au carrefour d'influences'. Thèse: Institut National de Langues et Civilisations Orientales.
- Mas'ûdî. Vol 1. 1962; Vol 2. 1965. *Les Prairies D'Or*. Trans. C. Barbier de Meynard and A. Pavet de Courteille, Ed. C. Pellat. Paris: Société asiatique.
- Nurse, D. and Hinnebusch, T. J. 1993. *Swahili and Sabaki: A Linguistic History*. With an addendum by G. Phillipson. Berkeley: University of California Press.

p.377

- Parker Pearson, M. 2010. *Pastoralists, Warriors and Colonists: The Archaeology of Southern Madagascar*. Oxford: BAR International Series.
- Pliny, 1962. *Natural History, Books VIII–XI*, Trans. Harris Rackham and William Henry Samuel Jones. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Pouwels, R. L. 1987. *Horn and Crescent: Cultural Change and Traditional Islam on the East African Coast, 800–1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pouwels, R. L. 2002. 'Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean to 1800: reviewing relations in historical perspective'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35 (2–3): 385–425.
- Radimilahy, C. 1998. *Mahilaka: An Archaeological Investigation of an Early Town in Northwestern*

- Madagascar. Uppsala: Department of Archaeology and Ancient History.
- Robertshaw, P., Wood, M., Melchiorre, E., Popelka-Filcoff, R. S. and Glascock, M. D. 2010. 'Southern African glass beads: chemistry, glass sources and patterns of trade'. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 37: 1898–912.
- Rougeulle, A. 2004. 'Le Yémen entre Orient et Afrique: Σarma, un entrepôt du commerce maritime médiéval sur la côte sud de l'Arabie'. *Annales Islamologiques* 38, 201–53.
- Rougeulle, A. (Ed.) 2015. *Sharma: Un Entrepôt de Commerce Médiéval sur la Côte du Hadramawt (Yémen, ca. 980–1180)*. British Foundation for the Study of Arabia Monographs 17. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Sheriff, A. 2005. 'Slave trade and slave routes of the East African coast'. In *Slave Routes and Oral Tradition in Southeastern Africa*, edited by B. Zimba, E. Alpers and A. Isaacman, 13–38. Maputo: Filsom Entertainment Ltd.
- Sinclair, P. 1991. 'Archaeology in eastern Africa: an overview of current chronological issues'. *Journal of African History* 32: 179–219.
- Sinclair, P., Ekblom, A. and Wood, M. 2012. 'Trade and society on the south-east African coast in the later first millennium AD: the case of Chibuene'. *Antiquity* 86: 723–37.
- Smith, M. and Wright, H. T. 1988. 'The ceramics from Ras Hafun in Somalia: notes on a classical maritime site'. *Azania* 33: 115–41.
- Spear, T. 2000. 'Early Swahili history reconsidered'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 33 (2): 257–90.
- Trimingham, J. S. 1964. *Islam in East Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Vernet, T. 2005. 'Les cités-états Swahili de l'archipel de Lamu, 1585–1810. Dynamiques endogènes, dynamiques exogènes'. PhD diss., Paris I.
- Viré, F. 1984. 'L'océan Indien d'après le géographe Abû Abd-Allah Muhammad Ibn Idrîs al-Hammûdî al-Hasanî, dit Al-Sarîf Al-Idrîsî (493–560 H./1100–1166) (Extraits traduits et annotés du *Livre de Roger*)'. *Études sur l'Océan Indien*, Coll. des travaux de l'Université de la Réunion, 13–45.
- Wallerstein, I. 1974. *The Modern World-System*, Vol. 1: *Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Wilkinson, J. C. 1981. 'Oman and East Africa: new light on early Kilwan history from the Omani sources'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 14 (2): 272–305.
- Wood, M. 2005. 'Glass beads and pre-European trade in the Shashe-Limpopo region'. MA thesis, University of Witwatersrand.
- Wood, M. 2011. *Interconnections: Glass Beads and Trade in Southern and Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean – 7th to 16th Centuries ad*. Uppsala: Uppsala University, Department of Archaeology and Ancient History.
- Wright, H. T. 1984. 'Early seafarers of the Comoro Islands: the Dembeni Phase of the IXth–Xth centuries AD' (with contributions from C. Sinopoli, L. Wojnarowski, E. S.

- Hoffman, S. L. Scott, R. W. Redding and S. M. Goodman). *Azania* 19: 13–59.
- Wynne-Jones, S. and Fleisher, J. 2012. 'Coins in context: local economy, value and practice on the East African Swahili coast'. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 22 (1): 19–36.

35

EASTERN AFRICA AND THE DHOW TRADE

Erik Gilbert

As other chapters in this book have made clear, the year 1000 CE seems to mark a watershed in Swahili history. In the eleventh century we see more towns, the scale of those towns increases, and public buildings begin to be made of stone. Simultaneously more imported ceramics appear in the archaeological record and platters replace more beaker-like serving dishes, indicating new preferences in ceramics and quite possibly changes in people's diets and eating habits. At a few sites there is also a shift from millet and sorghum to rice, which parallels the appearance of the new serving vessels (Walshaw 2010; Fleisher 2010a, b). This is also the era in which a group of authors has concluded that the Swahili became 'maritime' (Fleisher *et al.* 2015). No doubt, some aspects of this transformation are attributable to processes that were internal to Swahili culture. However, these transformations coincided with significant changes in the broader Indian Ocean world. Indeed, as the Indian Ocean became a more integrated economic and cultural system, the Swahili became increasingly urban and increasingly built their buildings from stone. The 1300–1500 peak of Swahili town life coincides with one of the more prosperous phases of the Indian Ocean economy. Clearly, the Swahili world's development and expansion paralleled and participated in processes that were part of broader changes in the Indian Ocean. Given that distance prevented the Swahili from participating in the Indian Ocean economy through overland trade, oceanic trade provided the critical link between the Swahili and the other bits of the Indian Ocean world. Boats, of course, made this possible.

Wind

Until recently, boats did little without wind. It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that steam engines became efficient enough to allow steamships to begin ignoring the wind systems of the oceans they sailed. As Felipe Fernandez-Armesto

observed,

Throughout the age of sail – that is, for almost the whole of history – wind determined what man could do at sea: . . . all the other motors of history meant little. In most of our traditional explanations of what has happened in history there is too much hot air and not enough wind.

(Cited in Pearson 2003: 20.)

p.379

The wind patterns of the Indian Ocean differ from those of the Atlantic and Pacific. Indian Ocean wind patterns are shaped by the Asian landmass, which sits to the north of the Ocean. The heating and cooling of the continent creates alternating high and low pressure systems over Asia, driving the monsoon pattern of winds and rainfall that characterise the Indian Ocean. From December to March, hot dry winds blow out of the northeast. Then from May to October the winds reverse, and wet stormy winds blow from the southwest. This weather system has served to tie together the lands of the Indian Ocean littoral from a very early time. A sailor wishing to travel from India or the Arabian Peninsula to eastern Africa (or India to Southeast Asia) could set out in December or January and arrive a month or two later, having come the whole way with a tail wind. Our sailor would then take a couple of months to sell the ship's cargo and purchase goods for the return trip. In May, when the winds reversed, he would head home, again with a tail wind (Fernandez-Armesto 2006: 36–7). Indian Ocean mariners were able to harness the monsoons for long-distance voyages from at least the first century bce, if not earlier (Chaudhuri 1985: 42). As a result, the Indian Ocean rim was linked by sea-borne commerce from an early time, and the maritime development of the Swahili coast paralleled the rest of the Indian Ocean world.

The dhow trade

It is an accepted convention to talk about traditional trade in the western Indian Ocean as the 'dhow trade' and to describe the region's ships as 'dhows'. Abdul Sheriff recently published a major work with the title *The Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean* (2010). The book that resulted from my own dissertation was called *Dhows and the Colonial Economy of Zanzibar* (Gilbert 2004), and the title of this chapter includes the phrase 'dhow trade'. The use of these terms is so well established that I will continue to do so, despite some reservations. Presumably there is something called a 'dhow' used in this trade; there are in fact vessels called dhows, but the term only came into use, as a generic term, in the second half of the nineteenth century, and then only by Europeans. The process by which this happened sheds some light on the romantic filter through which we view such ships and their associated trade (see also Prins 1965).

No words in Arabic or Swahili designate what we call dhows as a category of ship. Just

as in English we distinguish between a bark and brig, or tanker and container ship, Arabic or Swahili speakers distinguish between a *bedan* and *boom*, or *ganjah* and *bagala*. There is a particular type of vessel called a *dau* in Swahili, but it is just one of the many vessels that are called dhows in European languages.

The first appearance I have found of the word in English is from the early nineteenth century when a British naval officer (Smee 1811) described ships in the Zanzibar harbour, and mentioned that among them were several ‘dows’. These were included in a long list of European and Indian Ocean ship types, so it is clear that he did not think of the word as representing a category, or that what we now call dhows represented a discrete group of ships. Rather, there were lots of ships in the harbour and he rattled off a list of the types, not distinguishing the European from Indian Ocean ships, quite possibly because Omani ship owners often used European-style ships as well as local ones.

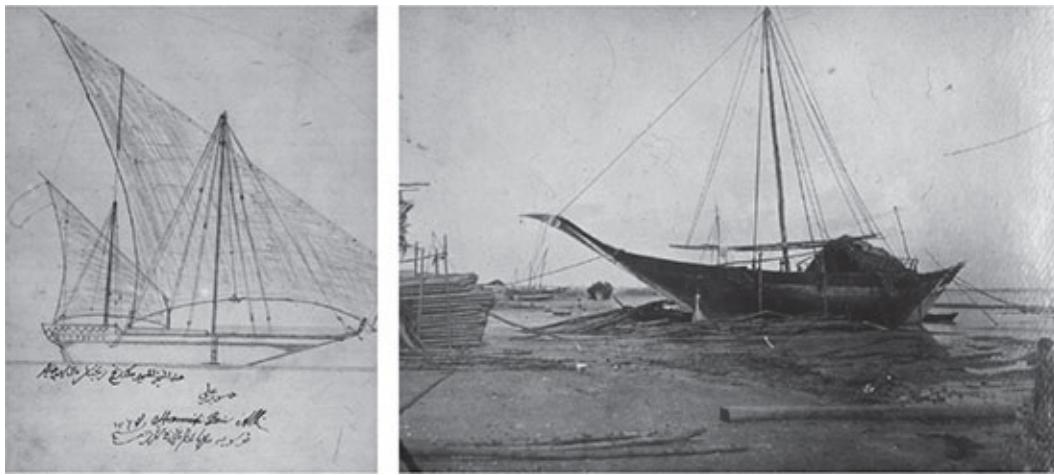
All this changed in the mid-nineteenth century, when British efforts to suppress the Indian Ocean slave trade began in earnest. This took place at a time when the Europeans were inclined to draw a distinct line between ‘European’ and ‘other’. Much effort to suppress the trade focused on the waters around Zanzibar, a transshipment point for slaves and other trade goods from eastern Africa. British warships patrolled the waters between Zanzibar and the Arabian Peninsula, stopping vessels they suspected of carrying slaves. Their rules of engagement gave them considerable latitude in deciding which to stop, and allowed them to sink or burn vessels they captured if they deemed them insufficiently seaworthy to bring to a port of adjudication. Captains were usually anxious to remain on patrol (they and their crews received prize money for capturing slave ships and freeing slaves), and often found it convenient to conclude that detained vessels were unseaworthy and should be destroyed before adjudication. European nations would not tolerate having their ships thus treated, so orders governing slave suppression efforts were written to apply only to ‘native vessels’, a legal term comparable to ‘dhow’, that continued to appear in statutes and other official publications into the 1960s (Gilbert 2004).

p.380

‘Native vessels’ came to be strongly associated with the slave trade. Two captains who had worked on the anti-slave trade effort wrote memoirs, and both used the term ‘dhow’ in their titles or texts, in the latter almost interchangeably with ‘slave ship’: *Dhow Chasing in Zanzibar Waters* (Colomb 1873) and *Slave Catching in the Indian Ocean* (Sullivan 1873). It is here I would argue that the notion of a discrete type of ship and a particular trade associated with that type of vessel was born. Whether the rules of engagement given to patrol officers, and/or the books some of them wrote, reflected or created that notion is anyone’s guess, but it is clear that ‘dhow trade’ had emerged in the colonial consciousness and that it was associated with slave-trading, smuggling and other nefarious activities.

In the West, sailing ships are distinguished primarily by their rigging. Dhows (which I use henceforth without quotes), which generally are lateen-rigged, are normally

distinguished from each other by hull type, so a *boom* is double-ended while a *bagala* has a high, square stern ([Figure 35.1](#), left). A *bedan* is double-ended with an unusual high stern, with a rudder controlled by ropes; it is square- rather than lateen-rigged. Similarly, the *mtepe*, the emblematic ship of the Swahili coast, is double-ended and carries a square sail ([Figure 35.1](#), right). Unlike other ships mentioned here, it was a sewn ship, made without nails. A *bedan* and *bagala* have different hulls and different rigs, but we call both (and many others) dhows (for a discussion of dhow types see Sheriff 2010: 93–9). But all they have in common is that they are made of wood and propelled by sails; they share these qualities with HMS Victory, Cutty Sark and Zheng He’s flagships, all clearly outside the dhow family.



[Figure 35.1](#) Left: line drawing of *ganja*/*bagala* from log book of a Salem ship (1840s). Right: photograph *c.* 1890 of *mtepe* beached in Zanzibar (Photographs courtesy of the Peabody Essex Museum)

So what do dhows have in common? Their otherness, exoticness and association with traditional trade. Nineteenth-century British naval officers saw them as ramshackle and primitive, carrying cargos (slaves) that undermined the civilised order they were trying to impose on the Indian Ocean. For modern scholars like Abdul Sheriff (2010), dhows represent a romantic pre-European trading world or, in later periods, a world that existed in parallel with the colonial economic order. For these scholars, dhows and the dhow trade are symbolic of a world characterised by what Amitav Ghosh (1994) has called ‘compromise and accommodation’, in stark contrast to the violence and religious conflict the Portuguese allegedly introduced to the Indian Ocean. In the end, the ships of the western Indian Ocean are just ships. They share qualities with each other and with other people’s ships, and both the ways in which they have been constructed and employed has changed significantly over time.

The earliest ships

In the study of early Swahili history, archaeologists generally have the upper hand over historians. Written records are scant and usually second-hand, while archaeological sites abound and excavation is relatively extensive. This situation is reversed when it comes to ships. With the exception of the occasional anchor shank and some interesting dhow-related graffiti, the archaeological record has little to say about ships. There are very few shipwrecks that have been well preserved in the Indian Ocean. An exception is the ninth-century Belitung wreck found near Sumatra, which appears to have been an Arab or Indian vessel engaged in trade with China (Flecker 2001). This, combined with the expense of nautical archaeology, means that in contrast to the Mediterranean or even the Atlantic, early Indian Ocean maritime history is known mostly through the written record.

The first written account of the East African coast is found in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (Jenott 2004), a first-century CE travel guide, probably written by an Alexandrine Greek, intended to aid other merchants in understanding trade routes, ports and markets of the western Indian Ocean. Its existence resulted from the emergence of a busy maritime trade that linked the Mediterranean to India and indirectly to China. In the first and second centuries, Roman consumers had the means to buy luxury goods such as silk and pepper from India. Roman trade reached out into the Indian Ocean, linking the trading worlds of the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. China's Han Empire was at the peak of its wealth at the time, and Chinese consumers also had a taste for Indian Ocean luxury goods. That the *Periplus* was written at all is evidence of the interest Graeco-Roman merchants had about trading conditions in the region.

The author of the *Periplus* refers to a region he calls Azania, usually associated with the Swahili coast. While it is not clear that the people who lived on the coast at this time were the progenitors of the Swahili (Horton and Chami, this volume), brief descriptions suggest that they prefigure some of the economic features of later Swahili life. At the island of Menuthias, for example, which may be Pemba Island, we are told that the inhabitants have 'sewed boats, and canoes hollowed from single logs, which they use for fishing and catching tortoise. In this island they also catch them in a peculiar way, in wicker baskets, which they fasten across the channel-opening between the breakers' (Jenott 2004: 15). Sewn boats, built without nails, have been a characteristic feature of the western Indian Ocean from the time of the *Periplus* almost to the present. The planks were sewn to each other though holes drilled into their edges. Sometimes the planks are pinned to each other by treenails: wooden dowels fit into holes drilled into the sides of the planking. In other cases, they are simply stitched together, and braced to internal ribs.

The most famous of these is the *mtepe* (pl. *mitepe*), still in use in eastern Africa as recently as the 1930s. *Mitepe* probably share many but not all characteristics of earlier sewn boats, and were constructed entirely without metal by sewing or lashing. The mast was

lashed in place and the small thatch deckhouse was similarly secured with rope. The author of the *Periplus* clearly found sewn boats enough of a novelty to mention them, but not so unusual that he felt obligated to explain how one could build a boat without iron nails. Indeed, sewn boats were known in the Mediterranean and probably also reasonably common in much of the western Indian Ocean. The Belitung ship, probably from the western Indian Ocean, was a sewn boat made without iron (Flecker 2001: 336).

p.382

Two basic questions surround the sewn boat. Why did people build boats that way in the first place? And why continue to do so after introduction of the apparently superior technology of the iron nail? Sewn boats occur in many parts of the world (Wright *et al.* 2001). The riverine societies of Mesopotamia and the Nile had little in the way of wood, but enjoyed ready access to reeds, so reeds were widely used for boatbuilding. In the Indian Ocean, the oldest known ships were made of sewn bundles of reeds (Vosmer 2003). Early wooden vessels in Egypt had decorative stem and stern features that resembled their reed-built precursors. These early boats were built without iron in part because it was as-yet undiscovered and then, after it was, because the Nile and Tigris-Euphrates rivers lack the large quantities of wood needed to make iron at a reasonable cost. Reed boats appear to have been used in the trade between Mesopotamia and the Indus, and Egyptian sewn wooden ships were used in the Red Sea, so it is unsurprising that other parts of the IOW such as eastern Africa also employed this technology (Sentence 1981: 2–3). Unlike arid regions of the north, however, this region had abundant timber and a precocious iron-making industry (Kusimba *et al.* 1994; Mapunda, this volume). So, by the late first millennium, coastal ship-builders would have had access to nails, probably high quality and inexpensive ones.

So why did the sewn-boat tradition survive into the twentieth century? There are a couple of possible explanations. First, they work just fine. Sewn boats leak, but all wooden boats leak: sewn boats just leak a little more. *Mitepe* had to be bailed almost constantly and would sink if left overnight without a crewmember to bail out the incoming water (Gilbert 1998: 47). Also, sewn boats need to be re-sewn and re-caulked every couple of years as the cord that holds them together deteriorates. Despite such inconveniences sewn boats have some real advantages: they are much more tolerant of being beached than ships with nailed hulls. Ships in the Indian Ocean traditional trade were typically brought into shallow water in creeks or protected bays, to load or unload. The ships would be floated as far inshore as possible at high tide and then, as the tide receded, they would end up dry or at least in shallow water so that the crew could carry cargo to or from shore. Nineteenth-century photos of dhows and earlier drawings often show *mitepe* beached in shallow water, propped up by poles to keep them from rolling onto their sides, and it seems that dhows spent a lot of time in this state. The weight of a beached hull puts a great deal of strain on the timbers of the ship. In a sewn ship the hull flexes and the cordage stretches, but the pressure on the cords does little damage to the planks. In a nailed hull there is less flexing,

but the pressures of the unsupported hull on the nails slowly damages the planks. Eventually the nails loosen in the planks and pull through the plank entirely, making plank replacement an expensive necessity. By contrast, the owner of a sewn boat replaces the cordage every couple of years, but the planks remain usable much longer (Gilbert 1998). So, in a world of small-creek ports without piers or wharfs, sewn boats made a lot of sense, especially in places farther north that had limited access to charcoal. For whatever reasons, sewn boats were a regular feature of the western Indian Ocean, and their reported presence at Menuthias tells us that the early eastern African coastal dwellers participated in the broader boatbuilding culture of the region, much as they did in more recent times.

Farther down the coast, probably somewhere between modern Dar es Salaam and the Rufiji Delta, the *Periplus* describes the southernmost location visited by the South Arabian ships, a place called Rhapta (Jenott 2004: 16–17). Ships from Arabia came there to purchase ivory, beeswax, tortoise shell, ambergris and slaves. In exchange they sold wheat, wine and textiles. This replicates trade patterns that continued into later periods. Coastal settlements provided forest or maritime products and the traders from the north brought manufactured goods such as textiles. It appears from the *Periplus* that it was Arab merchants who came to eastern Africa to trade, and not the reverse. The author also observes that the Arabs married local women and understood the language of the coast. Given the way that the monsoons compelled ships' crews to wait for months at their turn-around points while the winds shifted in their favour, neither of these assertions is surprising. What is, however, is the author's claim that the ancient South Arabian city of Musa, near modern Aden, exercised political authority in Rhapta. It seems improbable that Rhapta could be governed effectively at such a distance, especially when one considers that Arabs were present only during the trading season. Far more plausible is that representatives from Musa enjoyed some sort of authority over the visiting merchant community.

p.383

It is pretty clear that the vessels the author of the *Periplus* was describing were meant for fishing rather than long-distance trade, and archaeological evidence (fish bones found in middens) suggests that this fishing was taking place inshore (Quintana Morales and Horton 2014; Fleisher *et al.* 2015). In this early period, it is clear that while South Arabian ships were making the voyage, eastern African vessels were probably not making parallel voyages to the north. This gets at another question that has long shadowed the study of the dhow trade and is also relevant to later periods: did eastern African ships travel to Indian and South Arabian ports? Or was this a one-sided trade system with Arab and, later, Indian and Persian merchants, sending their ships to eastern Africa with no corresponding movement of the latter's vessels making the northward journey? The author of the *Periplus* seems to be saying that eastern Africans were junior partners, and that Arabs held the economic and political upper hand. At this early period, there is no evidence of eastern African vessels making the journey north. After 1300 CE, there is more evidence that Swahili vessels visited northern ports, and Tome Pires mentions merchants from Kilwa

present in the Southeast Asian port of Melaka (Pouwels 2002: 408). Furthermore, in later periods people became as mobile as ships and trade goods, and it becomes hard to say in any meaningful way whether a ship is eastern African or from South Arabia or the Gulf. Its owner might be from one place, its captain from another, its crew from yet another, and the ship itself constructed someplace that neither owner, captain nor crew called home.

The location of Rhapta remains archaeologically elusive, with little archaeological evidence of trade from this period (Boivin *et al.* 2013). The years that separate the era described by the *Periplus* and the watershed years of the early second millennium are strangely quiet when it comes to dhows. There are a few descriptions of eastern Africa but none of them say much about boats. However, during this time the farming and fishing peoples we now call Swahili appeared on the coast, living in villages, growing millet and sorghum, and increasingly venturing offshore in search of bigger, pelagic fish. It appears that there was a lull in the trade that put Rhapta on the map, however opaquely. Not more than a century or two after the *Periplus* was written, the trade system it describes withered away, as the Roman and Han empires began their parallel declines after 200 CE. The Indian Ocean economy did not disappear entirely between 200 and 900 but, for whatever reason, there are few historical sources to shed light on maritime developments during this period.

The emergence of towns, trade and the majority acceptance of Islam were part of the rise of a new and much more vibrant Indian Ocean economy after 1000 CE. Perhaps not coincidentally, this new commercial world was served by new ports, organisation of trade and types of ships. All of these have their parallels or local manifestations in eastern Africa. K. N. Chaudhuri (1985), founding father of Indian Ocean studies, argued that the major structural change in the Indian Ocean trade system occurred at this time. The change that interested him was the shift from long-distance voyaging to a series of interlocking trade networks. In the earlier system, if a merchant from the Persian Gulf wanted Chinese goods he sent a boat on the long, risky voyage to China. If the voyage was successful he would profit significantly; if not he would take a major, possibly ruinous, loss. Long-distance trade was a high-risk, high-return venture. In contrast, after 1000 a system emerged that moved goods from one end of the ocean to the other, but did so with shorter voyages that linked regional trade hubs.

p.384

These trade hubs, or ‘emporia’ as Chaudhuri called them, might have a hinterland that produced something of interest to merchants, but also served as general wholesale markets for goods from all over the Indian Ocean. Others had no hinterland to speak of and were convenient places for ships to converge and merchants to exchange their goods. Cambay in western India is an example of the former, while Aden in south Arabia is an example of the latter. Cambay was the main port of the Indian cotton and textile industry. Aden’s immediate hinterland was an impoverished mountainous desert. Some of these emporia

emerged at natural choke points. Aden was at the entrance to the Red Sea; Hormuz was on an island at the entrance to the Persian Gulf, Melaka was in the straits that offer the easiest passage between the Bay of Bengal and the South China Sea. Others owed their existence to a valuable local product. Calicut's hinterland was a major pepper production area, but was also near the southern tip of India and about a single monsoon season's voyage from Aden or Hormuz to the west, or Melaka to the east.

On the Swahili coast new ports also emerged, though none rivalled the larger emporia of the period. The two most important were Kilwa and Mombasa. Kilwa functioned in part as an emporium because it was about as far south as ships coming from Arabia could travel in a single monsoon season and be confident that they could make it home on the next monsoon. As a result, it served as an emporium for goods that came from points south – above all gold. The Swahili coast was a major provider of gold for the Indian Ocean, but does not appear to have produced gold locally. The major gold fields were further south in what is now Zimbabwe. Merchants (whose identities are unclear) brought gold from the interior to the coast at Sofala in modern Mozambique. From there, gold made its way to Kilwa overland or by sea (Map 1, p. xxii) (Horton and Middleton 2000: 101). Kilwa, like Aden or Melaka, served as an emporium based on its geography. By the fourteenth century, Kilwa's commercial importance had grown dramatically, with trade bringing visitors and shaping the physical appearance of the city. The city's best known visitor was Ibn Battuta, for whom Kilwa served as the southern terminus of a journey down the coast that included stops in Zeila and Mogadishu. Although he was often critical of places he visited, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, he seems to have been impressed by the city and its ruler's generosity to him. That ruler, Hasan ibn Sulaiman, was behind the construction of Husuni Kubwa, one of the largest public buildings on the coast. It is noteworthy that this ambitious ruler chose to make his mark by building what amounted to a giant warehouse. Husuni Kubwa was equipped with rooms for visiting merchants and storage space for their goods. Horton and Middleton (2000: 172–3) believe that it may represent an effort by the sultan to monopolise Kilwa's external trade.

Kilwa was not exclusively an emporium where goods from the north were exchanged for gold from the south. Its hinterland also produced valuable trade goods; Kilwa was a source of ivory from the interior and was quite close to Rufiji Delta timber supplies. Since the time of the *Periplus*, eastern Africa had provided ivory to Asian markets; it is softer and easier to carve than Asian ivory, and thus has long been prized in Asia. The other major local resource was mangrove wood from the Rufiji Delta (Horton and Middleton 2000: 76). Mangroves grow in river mouths and estuaries where rivers and creeks meet ocean tides. They can tolerate both fresh and salt water and thus dominate these environments in the tropics. Mangrove trees tend to have tall, thin and straight trunks and their wood and bark is full of tannin, which makes the bark useful for tanning and dyeing leather and their wood resistant to insects. Mangrove wood is easily accessible and transportable by boat. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a standard activity for ships' crews waiting for the

monsoons to reverse was to go to mangrove swamps and cut timber as a means of filling up their ships' holds for the return voyage (Villiers 2006: 216). Presumably this was also an attractive option for crews in Kilwa. A cargo of gold takes up little space, so mangrove wood would have been an ideal complement to a high value, low bulk cargo. Given that South Arabia and the Persian Gulf have extremely limited timber resources, mangrove wood, used for everything from house-building to charcoal-making to scaffolding, would have found a ready market. While high-value goods like gold, ivory and slaves were an important part of the Swahili commercial economy and the dhow trade that drove it, the humble mangrove was also central. It is worth noting that most of the major Swahili towns are close to large mangrove forests.

p.385

Mombasa was an emporium also, not for gold but for grain from the island of Pemba. In the nineteenth century, rice from Pemba and millet and sorghum from the mainland were carried by dhows to South Arabian points (Alpers 2009: 23–38). There are suggestions that Mombasa also received food stuffs from the islands in the sixteenth century and possibly earlier (Walshaw 2010: 141). Mombasa creek had mangroves, though not on the scale of the Rufiji. On the other hand, it is only 50 miles from Mombasa to the mangrove swamps in northern Pemba.

The western Indian Ocean saw changes in ship design after 1000. Lateen sails largely replaced square, and rudders replaced steering oars. It is difficult to separate local developments in ship design from changes occurring regionally. When one finds a ship drawing etched into building plaster (and there are a lot of these), it is impossible to know if these are the work of local people representing their own ships, looking at visiting ships, or visitors representing their own ships and so on. It also assumes meaningful distinctions between local boatbuilding practices and regional ones, which is by no means certain. Most etchings are found in places not easily visible, and tend to be crudely executed. Peter and Margaret Garlake (1964), who looked most closely at such drawings, contend that they were used not for decoration but for religious or magical purposes, and thus were not intended as accurate depictions of naval architecture. Because they constitute some of the only evidence we have for what ships looked like during this period, we will throw caution to the wind to discern as much as possible about shipbuilding during the high point of the Swahili cities.

The earliest drawings, found in Husuni Kubwa and the Great Mosque at Kilwa, and which probably date from the thirteenth–fourteenth centuries, show vessels that appear to be similar to the *mitepe* still in use in the last two centuries. They are double-ended, appear to have a square sail, and have a clear rudder rather than steering oar. They even have the distinctive bowsprit associated with the later historically documented *mtepe*. Slightly later drawings from Gede, which is notably the only major Swahili town not on the sea, show the first evidence of a lateen sail. Generally considered the quintessential feature of the

dhow, the triangular lateen sail dates from at least the tenth century on the Mediterranean. Later eighteenth-century drawings from Mombasa show many more lateen rigs, but also show what appears to be a *dau la mtepe*, a variation on the *mtepe* lacking the elaborate bowsprit. This suggests that just as the *mtepe* coexisted with other more advanced designs in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries because of its utility in shallow water, it coexisted with other designs in the eighteenth century and earlier, probably for reasons other than just the conservatism of sailors.

The next major event in the history of the broader Indian Ocean was the arrival of Europeans in their own ships. First the Portuguese after 1500 and then, by 1600, the Dutch, English and French became a naval presence in Indian Ocean. This brought western Indian Ocean shipping into commercial competition with Europeans and their ships, exposed Indian Ocean ship-builders to European shipbuilding techniques, and resulted in sea fights between dhows and European ships. This resulted in the development of new types of ships, but older styles of ships persisted alongside new ones.

p.386

The main difference between European and Indian Ocean ship-building techniques is that European ships were built with nails and other iron fittings, made frame-first, and built from heavy timbers meant to withstand the severe weather of the North Atlantic. In 1500 dhows were still mostly sewn boats, were built shell-first, and were more lightly built because the Indian Ocean had more forgiving weather than the home waters of the Europeans. European vessels were easier to manoeuvre and better able to absorb the recoil of cannons. As a result, they carried more and bigger cannons and almost always prevailed in fights with traditional Indian Ocean ships.

Dhows changed as a consequence of this encounter, but not as much as one might expect. First and foremost, the nailed hull became the new standard, and vessels like the *mtepe* that retained the sewn technology came to stand out as anachronistic (Chaudhuri 1985: 139). Some dhows began to mimic the appearance of European vessels. The *bagala* is probably influenced by the Portuguese caravel, and the eastern African *mashua* and *jahazi* have much in common with long boats and cutters among the European vessels (Villiers 2006: 364–5). But the similarities between these vessels and European ships were limited to their use of nails and the appearance of their hulls. The lateen sail was not supplanted by the square sail or the fore and aft sail. There was technology transfer, but it was limited.

It may be that the changes in Indian Ocean ship-building after 1500 were limited not because local ship-builders lacked the ability or inclination to incorporate European technologies, but because local people who wanted those features simply bought or built European-style ships (Chaudhuri 1985: 139). The Omanis bought large numbers of European ships in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and used them to create a commercial empire that extended to the Swahili coast. They also became feared sea fighters, who made effective use of cannon and the manoeuvrability of European ships

(Risso 2001: 305–6).

The other factor in this is that, in the eighteenth century, Indian shipwrights began to build ships that combined European ship-building techniques with Indian timber. The resulting ships, from high quality teak (an oily wood, durable and resistant to rot), were in some ways superior to ships from Europe built from oak. As ships like these captured the high ground of the maritime economy, dhows became increasingly part of a niche economy serving small markets and places not accessible to larger ships.

In eastern Africa this meant that, in the nineteenth century, dhows mostly carried goods locally and on the long-distance routes linking it to the Persian Gulf, South Arabia and India. In most cases European-style ships (though not always European-owned) also worked these routes. Even as steam ships came to dominate the world's shipping lanes in the late nineteenth century, dhows continued to carry certain types of cargos and serve specialised (usually poor and marginal) markets and regions. For example, the mangrove trade depended (and still depends) on dhows, and the Zanzibar clove industry used dhows to gather cloves from remote plantations until 1964. That pattern persisted until the 1960s, when the oil boom in the Persian Gulf drove wages so high that dhow owners could no longer recruit crews, virtually killing off the long distance trade that had linked the Gulf and eastern Africa. In the latter, dhows continue to serve the small offshore islands. Dhows still go back and forth between Zanzibar and the mainland. They carry cargoes as varied as cement, potatoes and timber. I once saw a Toyota Corolla arrive in Zanzibar perched on the decking of a *jahazi*. In the Lamu Archipelago small dhows connect the many little towns on the islands and transport tourists to the beaches. But these are the last strongholds of the dhow, which has largely been replaced by newer ships. Other than these few places, dhows and the dhow trade are now more a part of the region's heritage, serving to shape national identities and attract tourists.

p.387

References

- Alpers, E. A. 2009. *East Africa and the Indian Ocean*. Princeton: Markus Wiener.
- Boivin, N., Crowther, A., Helm, R. and Fuller, D. Q. 2013. 'East Africa and Madagascar in the Indian Ocean world'. *Journal of World Prehistory* 26 (3): 213–81, doi:10.1007/s10963-013-9067-4.
- Chaudhuri, K. N. 1985. *Trade and Civilization in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Colomb, P. H. 1873. *Slave Catching in the Indian Ocean*. London: Longmans and Green.
- Fernandez-Armesto, F. 2006. *Pathfinders: A Global History of Exploration*. New York: Norton.

- Flecker, M. 2001. 'A ninth-century AD Arab or Indian shipwreck in Indonesia: first evidence for direct trade with China'. *World Archaeology* 32 (3): 335–54.
- Fleisher, J. B. 2010a. 'Swahili synoecism: rural settlement and town formation on the central East African coast, AD 750–1500'. *Journal of Field Archaeology* 35 (3): 265–82, doi:10.1179/009346910x12707321358919.
- Fleisher, J. B. 2010b. 'Rituals of consumption and public feasting on the East African coast, AD 700–1500'. *Journal of World Prehistory* 23 (1): 195–217.
- Fleisher, J. B., Lane, P., LaViolette, A., Horton, M., Pollard, E., Quintana Morales, E., et al. 2015. 'When did the Swahili become maritime?' *American Anthropologist* 117 (1): 100–15.
- Garlake, P. and Garlake, M. 1964. 'Early ship engravings of the East Africa coast'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 63 (1): 197–205.
- Ghosh, A. 1994. *In an Antique Land: History in the Guise of a Traveler's Tale*. New York: Vintage.
- Gilbert, E. O. 1998. 'The *mtepe*: regional trade and the late survival of sewn ships in East African waters'. *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 27 (1): 43–50.
- Gilbert, E. O. 2004. *Dhows and the Colonial Economy of Zanzibar, 1860–1970*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Horton, M. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Jenott, L. 2004. 'The voyage around the Erythraean Sea'. Available online at: <https://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/texts/periplus/periplus.html>.
- Kusimba, C. M., Killick, D. J. and Cresswell, R. G. 1994. 'Indigenous and imported metals at Swahili sites on the coast of Kenya'. *Society, Culture, and Technology in Africa* 11: 63–77.
- Pearson, M. P. 2003. *The Indian Ocean*. London: Routledge.
- Pouwels, R. L. 2002. 'Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean to 1800: reviewing relations in historical perspective'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35 (2/3): 385–425.
- Prins, A. H. J. 1965. *Sailing from Lamu: A Study of Maritime Culture in Islamic East Africa*. Assen: Van Gorcum.
- Quintana Morales, E. M. and Horton, M. 2014. 'Fishing and fish consumption in the Swahili communities of East Africa, 700–1400 CE'. *Internet Archaeology*, doi:10.11141/ia.37.3.
- Risso, P. 2001. 'Cross-cultural perceptions of piracy: maritime violence in the western Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf region during a long eighteenth century'. *Journal of World History* 12 (2): 293–319.
- Sentence, P. D. 1981. 'The *mtepe*: the origins and longevity of an East African craft'. *Great Circle* 3 (1): 1–9.
- Sheriff, A. 2010. *Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean: Cosmopolitanism, Commerce, and Islam*.

New York: Columbia University Press.

Smee, T. 1811, in R. F. Burton, 2005 [1872]. *Zanzibar, City, Island, and Coast*. Lexington: Elibron.

Sullivan, G. J. 1873. *Dhow Chasing in Zanzibar Waters*. London: Low and Marston.

Villiers, A. 2006 [1940]. *Sons of Sindbad*. London: Arabian Publishing.

Vosmer, T. 2003. 'The Magan Boat Project: a process of discovery, a discovery of process'. *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 33 (1): 49–58.

Walshaw, S. C. 2010. 'Converting to rice: urbanization, Islamization and crops on Pemba Island, Tanzania, AD 700–1500'. *World Archaeology* 42 (1): 137–54, doi:10.1080/00438240903430399.

Wright, E. V., Hedges, R. E. M., Bayliss, A. and Van de Noort, R. 2001. 'New AMS radiocarbon dates for the North Ferriby boats: a contribution to dating prehistoric seafaring in northwestern Europe'. *Antiquity* 75 (290): 726.

36

EARLY INLAND ENTANGLEMENT IN THE SWAHILI WORLD, C. 750–1550 CE

Jonathan Walz

Introduction

This chapter emphasises economic and social entanglement inland of the Indian Ocean coastal fringe, but tied to it and to the Swahili world, *c.* 750–1550 ce (Horton 1996; Chami 1998; Kusimba 1999). Archaeologists continue to build a comparative knowledge base about the continental hinterland and past communities and linkages that bound inland people to the coast and vice versa (for example, Helm *et al.* 2012; Pawlowicz 2012; Kusimba *et al.* 2013; Walz 2013). Material evidence of inland entanglement can be gleaned directly from sites in the mainland interior or indirectly from littoral sites. Balanced study of regional connectivity across preconceived geographical areas, however, necessitates that inland people and pasts be treated with a quantity and quality of scholarly investigation equivalent in sophistication to coastal efforts. Equitable treatment can transform our understandings of regional pasts and the Swahili world.

After a brief foray into the research context, this chapter engages types of regional connectivity, especially ancient corridors and routes in eastern Africa. It further addresses material evidence for intraregional and global ties at inland and some relevant coastal pre-Swahili and Swahili sites. Northeast Tanzania is emphasised because of its demonstrated (for example, Walz 2005, 2010, 2013; Biginagwa 2012; Walz and Dussubieux 2016) and future potential to produce interior signatures of Swahili networks. Inland routes of exchange and traffic, such as those identified in northeast Tanzania (for example, Walz 2013), help to further transform belatedly tired representations of inland Africans as disconnected from coastal and global goings-on. Instead, findings begin to reposition inland communities as integral to larger commercial and social networks, not only as consumers, but also as producers of key items (for example, Schmidt *et al.* 1992; Allen 1993; Chami 1994; Haaland and Msuya 2000; Kusimba and Kusimba 2000, 2005, this

volume).

Spatial and temporal notes

The Zanzibari–Inhambane environment of coastal eastern Africa incorporates near-shore islands such as the Lamu Archipelago, but also a mosaic environment on the continent's mainland (see Lane and Breen, this volume). The seascape and littoral spaces of the western Indian Ocean eventually grade into estuarine, riparian and highland ecologies. In some areas of Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique, this inland gradient is little interrupted by geographical impediments. Large rivers, like the Tana and Rufiji, present aquatic corridors, and the Eastern Arc Range of mountains, bearing unique biological and geological resources, approaches the coast to within 20 km. In northeast Tanzania, these mountains are visible from the coast and out at sea, serving as topographical markers and resource magnets to human communities.

p.389

In areas of geographical and biological diversity, environments motivate interaction among diverse human communities practising a range of lifeways (Abungu and Mutoro 1993; Duarte 1993; Walz 2010; Kusimba and Kusimba this volume). Thus, drawing boundaries to separate maritime, riverine and terrestrial identities and practices becomes more than inexact (Pearson 1998). Not all people living on the 'coast' are 'maritime' and not all people 'inland' are separated from the 'the aquatic'. Moreover, communities' orientations shift through time based on local and regional exigencies and desires. Claims and questions about the maritime nature of the Swahili (for example, Fleisher *et al.* 2015) thus must be accompanied by robust queries that probe their inland linkages, and also the orientations and bonds of contemporaneous non-Swahili communities across space and time. With few exceptions, this considerable task has yet to be fully embraced for eastern Africa.

For archaeologists, among others, an additional danger arises in that contemporary and historical archaeologies often fail to contextualise more recent timeframes and to test for human connections to deeper pasts. If investigations (for example, Mutoro 1987; Helm 2004), including those conducted in northeast Tanzania serve as a guide (below; see also Walz 2005, 2010, 2015), then archaeology employed more equitably across periods (recent or 'historical' *and* ancient or 'prehistoric') and geographies (coast *and* inland) is capable of revealing aspects of connectivity transformative to interpretations of the present and past, including Swahili society and history as well as the development of economic and social networks of large scale (for example, Fosbrooke 1957; Allen 1974; Ekblom 2012; Pawlowicz and LaViolette 2013; Walz 2015; Schmidt 2016).

Entanglement

In overarching terms, ‘entanglement’ is interconnection, in this case among communities centred at different locations on the regional landscape of eastern Africa. Entanglement can take different forms depending on circumstances, but at the very least it draws together people, ideas, practices and goods. At its core, entanglement is relational and dialectical (for example, Fernandini and Der 2016). In such an arrangement, communities engage in symbiotic and competitive relations. Entanglement leaves intangible and material clues, although the tropical climate impact organics (Stiles 1992; Allen 1993; Chami 1994; Kusimba and Kusimba, this volume). Thus, linguistic and other immaterial evidence, including practices among contemporary communities, prove invaluable for research into ancient entanglement (for example, Nurse and Spear 1985; Walsh 1992/3; Gonzales 2009; Walz 2015).

In the Swahili world (as elsewhere), and prior to urbanisation, social, political, economic and ritual interactions developed between urban communities and their countrysides (Smith 2014). Stonetowns on the coast administered countrysides, produced and marketed items for long-distance exchange, and emulated elite ritual and religious (Islamic) styles and goods to build nodes of authority (Wright 1993; Kusimba 1999; Horton and Middleton 2000; Sinclair and Håkansson 2000; cf. LaViolette and Fleisher 2005). By the 1990s, each of these functional interpretations created a space for non-coastal African communities and inland goods in regional political economies and coastal livelihoods, Swahili and otherwise. In effect, theoretical advances challenged caricatures about inland people found in early Eurasian travelogues and colonialist scholarship. Theory made possible the integration of inland others.

p.390

However, in the historiography of coastal scholarship a tendency prevails for researchers to carry out archaeological investigations of Swahili ‘inner landscapes’: stonetowns and the immediate surroundings of their residents (cf. Fleisher and LaViolette 1999; Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2016). Thus, ‘outer landscapes’ – or hinterlands – are less well known, despite their regular incorporation into interpretations of regional political economy (cf. Horton 1987; Sinclair and Håkansson 2000). This trend of highlighting inner landscapes is important, because early shifts in interpretation of the functions of coastal towns were not enough to draw archaeologists’ practice to the deep hinterland. Rather, it was the discovery of non-local items at inland sites.

Sparsely distributed finds located in the mainland hinterland or at coastal settlements indicated some kind of entanglement (for example, Schmidt *et al.* 1992; Chami 1994). Such down-the-line interaction transited people, goods and ideas from ‘village to village’ in an informal and frequently non-linear manner. Foodstuffs regularly moved in this way to and from the umland: the area immediately surrounding coastal settlements (Pearson

1998; Horton and Middleton 2000). Alternatively, signatures of entanglement might be ‘patterned’, with implications for scholarly interpretations of economic and social linkages through time (for example, Walz 2010), an example of which follows. Patterned entanglement occurred among nodes, including along inland corridors such as the slave and ivory caravan routes of recent centuries (for example, Wilding 1980; Sheriff 1987; Ambler 1988; Mutoro 1998; Biginagwa and Mapunda, this volume).

The types of coast–inland entanglement noted above – general and patterned – are not mutually exclusive and may have occurred simultaneously. Furthermore, where there has been an appropriate density of research, evidence of their predominance varies across sub-regions and time (for example, Helm 2004; Kusimba and Kusimba, this volume). However, and this is crucial, rather than assume the variety and intensity of entanglement between a specific coast and its hinterland, economic and social relations should be tested in an interdisciplinary manner to reveal the character of political economic interactions on coastalscapes (LaViolette *et al.* 1989; Schmidt *et al.* 1992; Sutton 1994/5; Kusimba and Kusimba 2000; Walz 2005, 2013; Kusimba *et al.* 2013; Shipton *et al.* 2013).

Due to several factors, early archaeologists were reluctant to accept coastal connectivity to inland communities (Caplan 2007; Schmidt and Walz 2007). However, respected scholars also made arguments based on scientific perspectives, including a seeming lack of demand for local products (Posnansky 1975), high transportation costs (Sutton 1973), and an absence of inland political structures to organise trade (Unomah and Webster 1976). Inevitably, however, studies of entanglement in the Swahili world have undergone a conceptual revolution (cf. Wright 1993). As Mitchell (2005: 24–25) notes, interactionist studies emphasise ‘how societies structure their interactions through material culture . . . to send social signals’. Mutually constitutive relations across ‘cores’, ‘margins’ and ‘peripheries’ thereby form systems of social value around essential practicalities and ideas (Prestholt 2008).

Jeffrey Fleisher’s (2010) scholarship on the distribution and use of ritual feasting bowls among early Muslims and potential converts on Pemba Island is characteristic of interactionist studies that highlight political economy in their assessment of entanglement. Items that might be treated similarly include shell-stamped ceramics at Murrupania IV in Mozambique (Sinclair 1991: 187–92) and the various shell beads excavated at Kwa Mgogo in Tanzania’s northeast interior (Walz 2010, 2013, 2016). One outcome of this type of research is the erosion of an implicit distinction between the ‘cosmopolitan’ Swahili, an undefined and ‘static’ village culture in the umland, and the agrarian and pastoral hinterland lying beyond it in Africa’s vast interior.

It is difficult to evaluate the overall character of coast–inland entanglement due to the paucity and unevenness of research. General entanglement, as discussed above, arises consistently in the archaeological record of the mid- to late first-millennium CE (for example, Chami 1994; Helm 2000; Kusimba and Kusimba 2000; Walz 2005). Artefact finds at coastal sites, such as Kilwa Kiswani (Chittick 1974), Shanga (Horton 1996) and Ungwana (Abungu 1989) – including, for example, plant and animal remains and geological samples with traceable origins – indicate interior connectivity at early Swahili stonetowns. Early inland sites also yield scattered items of coastal or external origin, such as glass beads and marine shells. Pottery styles, notably as TIW/Tana Tradition forms and designs, appear across the coast and interior, offering evidence of broadly shared material culture (Abungu 1989; Chami 1994; Helm 2000; Mapunda 2008; Walz 2010).

Since the mid-first millennium CE, it is clear that a range of items moved from the coast inland or from inland agrarian, agropastoral, pastoral and hunter-gatherer communities to the coast (Kusimba and Kusimba, this volume). Through informal or formalised relationships, people and these items – including ceramics, iron bloom and tools, glass beads, aromatics, fish, animal skins and marine shells – flowed down-the-line from village to village and met political–economic needs and desires. In particular, this trend is evident through time and up to the present in south-east Kenya, an area of intensive research (Thorbahn 1979; Kusimba and Kusimba 2000; Oka *et al.* 2009). In this coastalscape, contemporary people and practices, historical documents and oral traditions, and archaeological finds contribute to an integrated model of entanglement across groups from the middle Holocene to the present (Kusimba *et al.* 2013).

Archaeologists are more likely to identify durable prestige items than everyday organic goods such as textiles, leather, foodstuffs and medicines. According to documents, contemporary practices, oral traditions and linguistics, these latter types of goods constitute the bulk of items relayed in general entanglement. In eastern Africa, provenance studies of common durable objects, like ceramics, are poorly developed. Rock crystal and copper from the deeper interior, however, are recoverable. But these materials also remain understudied, as do commonly found artefacts made from marine shell, ostrich eggshell and landsnail shell. Iron is the best studied among such items. Despite the challenges of preservation and recovery, small collections of artefacts such as glass and semi-precious stone beads, and pieces of gum arabic, with coastal or oceanic origins, continue to bolster arguments for mid- to late first-millennium coast–interior interactions (for example, Mutoro 1987; Schmidt *et al.* 1992; Chami 1994; Helm 2000; Kusimba 2009).

For the second millennium, hinterland sites inland of the central Kenya coastline bear cowries at Mijikenda sites (for example, Mutoro 1987; Kiriama *et al.* 2006). And the deep interior has yielded glass beads recovered from the excavation of thirteenth–fifteenth-century burials in the Upemba area of the Democratic Republic of Congo (de Maret 1979). Similar glass bead finds appear at sites in western Uganda (Reid 1991; Robertshaw 1997). Scholars in southern Africa have long recognised long-term coast–inland links, for

example at Great Zimbabwe and in the Kalahari (Pikirayi 2001; Denbow *et al.* 2015).

As noted, this early recognition was not the case in eastern Africa. The first coastal-oriented projects conscious of the potential of inland linkages typically examined areas within 20 km of the coastline (for example, Abungu 1989; LaViolette *et al.* 1989; Schmidt *et al.* 1992; Duarte 1993). Some later studies focused on sites further inland, such as at Dakawa in central Tanzania. Based on extensive excavations, researchers at Dakawa drew a conclusion of coastal connectivity supported by no direct evidence (cf. Haaland and Msuya 2000). Mass iron production and TIW/TT ceramics, themselves indirect evidence of likely extra-local ties, were not accompanied by definitive coastal items. Although general entanglement between coast and inland is now accepted, its character remains poorly known, with few exceptions (cf. Oka *et al.* 2009; Kusimba *et al.* 2013).

p.392

Inland research projects often deploy informal reconnaissance to identify sites (cf. Helm 2000; Mapunda *et al.* 2003) or emphasise single settlements absent a regional context (cf. Haaland and Msuya 2000). It is fair to argue that different approaches and scales of analysis respond to different questions, and that each project generated valuable insights including the recovery of a wider range of settlement types and signs of connectivity. But, when the overall quality of methods (systematic *vs.* non-systematic) and scales of survey and excavation vary between the coast and mainland hinterland, comparative analysis suffers. Thus, the particulars of economic and social entanglement remain elusive. Different methodological practices have helped to conceal aspects of inland people and their ties to the wider region, including to the Swahili.

Given the trends, research in southeast and central Kenya has been revolutionary in its scope (for example, Helm 2000, 2004; Kusimba and Kusimba 2000; Kusimba 2009; Kusimba *et al.* 2013, Shipton *et al.* 2013). Among the greatest contributions of these projects is their attention to environments, diverse human groups and their contributions, and integration of oral traditions into a balanced understanding of dynamic, regional-scale pasts (Thorbahn 1979; Kusimba and Kusimba 2005). In southern Tanzania, archaeologists also have made strides in building countryside pasts that engage urban-rural networks and related shifts in economic and social relations (Mapunda 2008; Pawlowicz 2012). Scholars at the University of Dar es Salaam initiated this kind of work in the middle 1980s (for historiography see, for example, Schmidt *et al.* 1992; Chami 1994, Pouwels 1999; Spear 2000; Walz 2010: 35–67; Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2015).

From such studies, archaeologists now know that the relations between coastal and inland communities shifted somewhat as Indian Ocean influences began to play a greater or equal role in coastal livelihoods at the turn of the first millennium CE. It can be argued that social adjustments at various points along the coast (for instance, compare southeast Kenya with southern Tanzania) are part and parcel of these new circumstances, including the rise of the urban Swahili (Pawlowicz 2012; Kusimba *et al.* 2013; Shipton *et al.* 2013).

As the height of Swahili urbanism had ended and was declining 1550 to 1750 CE, it is argued that a new entanglement emerged, which took the form of defined caravan routes for slave and ivory traffic (for example, Sheriff 1987; Ambler 1988; Biginagwa and Mapunda, this volume,).

Such a dramatic change in coast–inland relations is unlikely to have arisen from scratch, raising questions about corridors of coast–inland interaction pre-1750. To search for early entanglement in this form required: (1) up-scaled, systematic and intensive archaeological assessments, and (2) attention to nineteenth-century routes that serve as testable analogies for earlier, patterned entanglement. Despite some regional-scale fieldwork advancing the inland archaeology of the coast, as noted above, there were no investigations of potential inland corridors and more ancient routes until I launched a study along these lines in northeast Tanzania.

Northeast Tanzania

In 1999, I initiated an historical archaeology project that employed ethnographic observations of rotating markets, and more recent traces of history, to integrate inland African pasts into a long-term regional narrative (Walz 2005, 2010, 2013, 2015). I hypothesised that northeast Tanzania's unique geography (mountains that approach the coast) and mosaic environment (Burgess *et al.* 2007) fostered past symbiotic and competitive relations among diverse human groups (per Abungu 1989; Duarte 1993; Kusimba and Kusimba 2005; Gonzales 2009; Oka *et al.* 2009). The project connected a deep hinterland to the Indian Ocean coast via a region understood on its own terms.

p.393

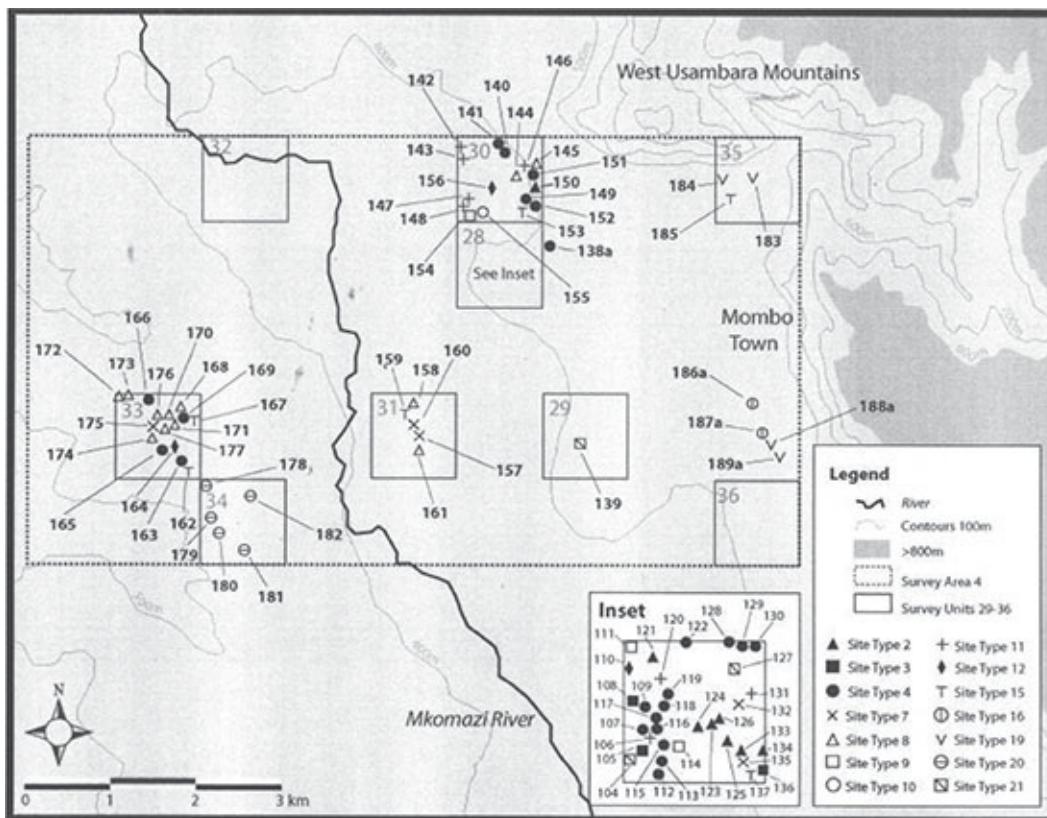
Research employed a 'caravan route' strategy and systematic survey in five areas that follow a natural and historical corridor in the lower Pangani/Ruvu Basin. The tested corridor stretches more than 150 km inland and corresponds to market nodes along a nineteenth-century slave and ivory caravan route, known from European documents and African oral histories and traditions (for overview of historical sources see, for example, Walz 2005, 2010, 2015; Lane 2011; Biginagwa 2012). In the largest intensive survey of its kind in eastern Africa (44 km²), I recorded sites and evidence of settlement, production, exchange and consumption. By tracing the route's genealogical precedents, the project sought to identify earlier patterns of entanglement to co-join areas and communities in the region (Walz 2013).

With a Tanzanian team, I worked from the known (historical coast) to the less well known, to the archaeologically unknown hinterland. We employed systematic surface survey along an interior route extending from Pangani Bay toward Mount Kilimanjaro. Investigations revealed a rich history of human settlement in the lower Pangani/Ruvu

Basin, with clear inland connections to the littoral, the earliest dating to the mid-first millennium CE and up to recent centuries. TIW/TT located in the vicinity of contemporary Mombo (100 km inland) supplied indirect evidence of ancient entanglement (see also Soper 1967; Schmidt *et al.* 1992; Chami 1994; Horton 1996; Helm 2000; Mapunda 2008). Contemporaneous and later ceramic traditions also appear within this corridor, along the coast, and in the proximal Eastern Arc Mountains. Inland sites with substantial residues of local production and direct evidence of interaction emerge as central to regional political economies that integrated the coast and interior.

Specifically, the project documented 337 archaeological localities spanning from the Early Stone Age to present. It also located numerous Indian Ocean and Swahili items at ancient sites 100 km or more inland; aligned fluctuations in production and consumption between the emergent and established Swahili and their outer landscapes; broadly correspondent shifts in settlement patterns; and indications of pre-nineteenth-century route infrastructures that penetrate inland (Walz 2005, 2010, 2013, 2015; Schmidt and Walz 2007; Walz and Dussubieux 2016). Moreover, systematic excavations suggest continued use of specific vicinities, like Mombo, as central nodes of regional connection for exchange and marketing through time and up to the present. People in this corridor secured and remade their livelihoods by producing, exchanging and consuming goods, and by debating the flows of power on a shared landscape. The project shows that inland communities were more integral to pasts of scale than once thought.

Two localities deserve specific attention. The vicinity of Mombo lies approximately 100 km from the coast in a seasonal river valley, at the intersection of the lush West Usambara Mountains and arid Masai Steppe ([Figure 36.1](#)). Systematic investigations at Mombo yielded 80 archaeological sites including large clusters of sites bearing TIW/TT (Figure 36.2a) and later, Group B ceramics, a likely affiliate of the latter pottery dated 800–1250 CE (Soper 1967; Walz 2005, 2010; Biginagwa 2009). Mombo thus has the largest known concentration of TIW sites in inland Tanzania and perhaps East Africa. The scale of the survey and findings there suggests that similar survey elsewhere may identify coastal linkages. A single large cluster of such sites, including Kobe, covers 1.3 km², with its greatest extent in the late first millennium CE. Not coincidentally, this period corresponds to the earliest Swahili-related settlements in Kenya and later, Tanzania, and to coastal sites that bear artefacts demonstrated to have inland origins.

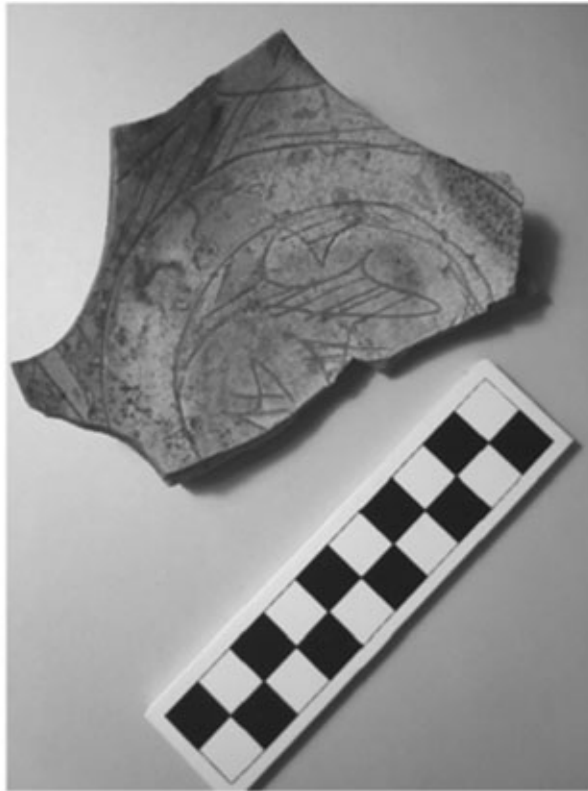


[Figure 36.1](#) Map of Mombo (Survey Area 4), Tanzania. Archaeological sites marked, including Kwa Mgogo (Site 177)

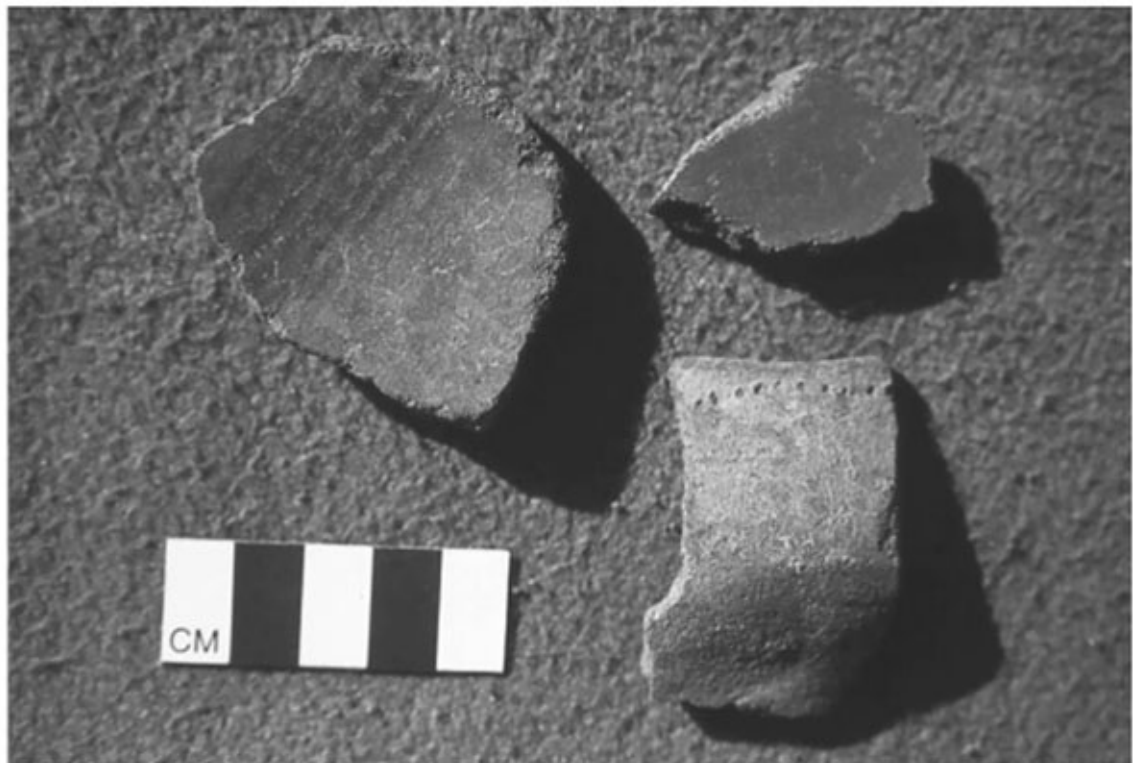
(a)



(b)



(c)



[*Figure 36.2*](#) Ceramics indicative of coast–interior continuities or links. Excavated from sites in Tanzania, *c.* 500–1750: (a) early TIW/Tana Tradition ceramics (pre-900); (b) hatched Sgraffiato (*c.* twelfth century); (c) sherds of ritual serving vessels associated with Swahili Ware (*c.* thirteenth century) (cm scales)

The site of Kwa Mgogo (650–1350 CE) sits on a low ridge among baobabs and alongside a perennial spring. Its preservation and the content of its record are remarkable. Systematic excavations at the site yielded more than 500 kg of TIW/TT and Group B ceramics, more than 10 kg of faunal remains, and more than 30 querns employed in food processing. Most of the more than objects of personal adornment recovered are fashioned from *Achatina* spp., giant African landsnail (Figure 36.3a). Trenches yielded all stages of shell bead production at the household scale, indicating semi-specialised production (Schortman and Urban 2004). However, the use of shell beads in excavated burials and indications of wider regional exchange also imply production for ritual veneration and exchange.



[Figure 36.3](#) Beads indicative of coast-interior ties excavated from sites in interior north-eastern, Tanzania: (a) beads of marine shell and giant landsnail (*Achatina* spp.) shell (c. 700–1350); (b) beads of wound glass (c. thirteenth to fifteenth centuries)

Screening produced more than 60 marine shells, including multiple aragonite (fossilised giant clam) beads, and 16 small tubes of marine shell as well as other non-local objects. The production and timed transition from shell discs to the presence of shell tubes parallels a contemporaneous trend at coastal sites like Shanga (Horton 1996). Some ceramics bear

marine shell impressions. Other artefacts of foreign origin include 34 glass beads and beads of semi-precious stone (for example, rock crystal, carnelian and agate) (Figure 36.3b). The elemental signatures of 11 glass beads indicate Zhizo Series glass (eighth–tenth century) from the Middle East, and later beads (post-1000) of Indo-Pacific varieties from South Asia (Walz and Dussubieux 2016; for elsewhere, see Wood 2011, this volume; Wood *et al.* 2016). Among later items at Kwa Mgogo are multiple sherds of hatched sgraffiato of Middle Eastern origin (Figure 36.2b) and coastal Swahili ceramics, including specimens of red burnished and graphited feasting bowls (Figure 36.2c) typical of early urban settlements on the coast (see Fleisher 2010). We also recovered a wound glass bead from a post-1250 context, and gneiss blocks, bone objects, iron, copper and modified graphite pieces (Walz 2010, 2013).

p.397

At Gonja, more than 150 km inland, the South Pare Mountains meet the arid lowlands. Well outside the Zanzibari–Inhambane Coastal Mosaic, this sub-region yielded first and early second millennium CE ceramics, including small sites with TIW/TT ceramics located away from the mountains. Maore Ware and Group B ceramics (Soper 1967; Walz 2010; Walz and Odunga 2004) predominate at more than 20 open-air sites in the survey universe at Gonja. Sites associated with Group B ceramics, in particular, extend in a clustered distribution along the skirt of the mountains (Walz 2010). Surface and excavated finds show a spike in iron production and the manufacture of landsnail shell beads contemporary with the growth of coastal communities and emergence of Swahili urban localities, for example at Tongoni, during the late first and early second millennium (Walz 2010).

During the late first millennium and first half of the second, Gonja Maore's residents kept domestic stock, cultivated crops and consumed beer. Landsnail shells are profuse in excavated strata and show the production sequence for disc beads, from blanks to finished ornaments. An ash mound more than 30 m long (now partially destroyed due to modern construction) in the northeast sector of the 4 ha² site literally contains tens of thousands of purposefully, perhaps ritually, discarded beads of landsnail shell, ostrich eggshell and other materials. Pieces of rock crystal and a small number of Indo-Pacific glass beads and shards of glass typical of Swahili sites indicate more far-flung ties at the height of Swahili urbanism during the mid-second millennium (Walz 2010). Beads recovered at Gonja and near Mombo constitute a portion of the 195 bead types generated from the overall project: 149 of imported glass and 46 of other materials (Walz 2010, 2016; Walz and Dussubieux 2016).

Iron smelting sites with slag heaps, tuyere fragments and remnant furnace bases (numbering as many as 25/site) also characterise the archaeological localities at Gonja, which date predominantly to 900–1250, a period of population growth along the coast of southeast Kenya and northeast Tanzania (Kusimba 1999; Helm 2004; Walz 2010).

Residents smelted iron to meet extra-local, putatively coastal needs (see Kusimba and Killick 2003). This interpretation takes into account direct evidence of coast–inland exchange at Gonja Maore (compared with a lack of such evidence, for instance, at Dakawa), the near absence of iron objects recovered in the Gonja vicinity, and the paucity of contemporaneous iron production at Swahili coastal settlements like Tongoni (Walz 2010). Exchange with societies of different lifeways in the region, including hunter-gatherers, served people well, including up to and through Portuguese incursions and the disruptions of production and distribution during the ‘Little Ice Age’ (1500–1750) that eventually contributed to the decline of Swahili stonetowns (Kusimba 1999; Ehret 2001; Oka *et al.* 2009; Ekblom 2012).

In sum, an historical archaeology approach that takes into account contemporary and historical communities and practices and deploys a caravan route strategy helped to further unseat the notion of the hinterland as a trope for the sparseness of human history. The project’s results at late first-millennium sites and those dating to the mid-second millennium spur a reconsideration of human entanglement for Africa–Africa and Africa–Indian Ocean relations. Such patterned entanglement is apparent in outer landscapes that contributed people, resources and goods to settlements at the core of the Swahili world, such as Mtwapa and Tongoni (Kusimba and Kusimba 2000; Walz 2010). Stonetowns likely administered settlement hierarchies, but also consumed and distributed goods of ritual and authority prior to and during Swahili predominance, as power and territory were maintained and elaborated (Gonzales 2009; Walz 2013).

p.398

Although it is not the focus here, urban collapse at Swahili settlements (1550–1750) influenced inland societies, which were also undergoing social and political changes. In southeast Kenya/northeast Tanzania, communities like the Kamba took on a new and significant role as middlemen in the burgeoning slave and ivory trade (Kusimba and Kusimba 2000). Groups like the Pare and Zigua competed for access to the new flow of goods, as chiefdoms and kingdoms vied for control of people and goods during a period of increasing uncertainty (for example, Håkansson 1998; Oka *et al.* 2009; Helm 2000; Walz 2010; Biginagwa, this volume). During this period, defined routes – patterned entanglement – emerged as characteristic rather than exceptional in wider eastern Africa, evidence of which is clear in later documents and oral traditions (for example, Giblin 1992). Northeast Tanzania’s ancient inland corridor shows that patterned entanglement was not born in the last few centuries, although that of the late eighteenth-century may have taken an even more defined and regularised form, driven by imperialism, capitalism and the increased exploitation of vulnerable people and environments in the region.

Reflections

Entanglement is a process. A new social understanding of northeast Tanzania is not reducible to pieces on a chess board or lines on a map. Rather, it links to the ways people lived on landscapes and strategised and enacted their political, economic and social relationships. Connectivity is a useful way to frame human practices within material networks.

Twenty years ago it was observed that insufficient evidence existed to detail coast–interior linkages and their consequences in eastern Africa (LaViolette *et al.* 1989; Sutton 1994/5). The situation now has begun to shift based on the application of systematic studies of the outer landscapes of the Swahili world. Yet a comparatively small number of researchers, and the unevenness of study in the vast hinterland, are still insufficient to gain the best picture of such areas and their people. Umlands and hinterlands should be approached as central to regional entanglement. Countrysides bear remnants still obscured of nodes and networks in which power, identity and territory were made, negotiated and elaborated outward. I hope the results of the research presented here encourage more archaeologists to engage people and histories beyond the coast but entangled with it.

References

- Abungu, G. 1989. ‘Communities on the River Tana, Kenya: an archaeological study of relations between the delta and the river basin, 700–1890 AD’. PhD diss., University of Cambridge.
- Abungu, G. and Mutoro, H. 1993. ‘Coast–interior settlements and social relations in the Kenyan coastal hinterland’. In *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns*, edited by T. Shaw, P. Sinclair, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, 694–704. London: Routledge.
- Allen, J. de V. 1974. ‘Swahili culture reconsidered: some historical implications of the material culture of the northern Kenya coast in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries’. *Azania* 9: 105–38.
- Allen, J. de V. 1993. *Swahili Origins: Swahili Culture and the Shungwaya Phenomenon*. London: James Currey.
- Ambler, C. 1988. *Kenyan Communities in the Age of Imperialism: The Central Region in the Late Nineteenth Century*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Biginagwa, T. 2009. ‘Excavations of 19th-century caravan trade halts in north-eastern Tanzania: a preliminary report’. *Nyame Akuma* 72: 52–60.
- Biginagwa, T. 2012. ‘Historical archaeology of the 19th-century caravan trade in north-eastern Tanzania: a zooarchaeological perspective’. PhD diss., University of York.
- Burgess, N., Butynski, T. M., Cordeiro, N. J., Doggart, N. H., Fjeldså, J., Howell, K. M.,

- et al.* 2007. 'The biological importance of the Eastern Arc Mountains of Tanzania and Kenya'. *Biological Conservation* 134: 209–31.
- Caplan, P. 2007. "‘But the coast, of course, is quite different’: academic and local ideas about the East African littoral". *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1 (2): 305–20.
- Chami, F. 1994. *The Tanzanian Coast in the First Millennium ad: Archaeology of the Iron-Working, Farming Communities*. Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis.
- Chami, F. 1998. 'A review of Swahili archaeology'. *African Archaeological Review* 15 (3): 199–218.
- Chittick, N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City of the East African Coast*, 2 Vols. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- de Maret, P. 1979. 'Luba roots: the first complete Iron Age sequence in Zaire'. *Current Anthropology* 20: 233–5.
- Denbow, J., Klehm, C. and Dussubieux, L. 2015. 'The glass beads of Kaitshàa and early Indian Ocean trade into the far interior of southern Africa'. *Antiquity* 89 (344): 361–77.
- Duarte, R. 1993. *Northern Mozambique in the Swahili World: An Archaeological Approach*. Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis.
- Ehret, C. 2001. 'The Kenyan interior, 1500–1800'. In *African Historians and African Voices: Essays Presented to Professor Bethwell Ogot on his Seventieth Birthday*, edited by E. Odhiambo, 33–46. Basel: P. Schlettwein.
- Eklom, A. 2012. 'Livelihood, security, vulnerability and resilience: a historical analysis of Chibuenene, southern Mozambique'. *Ambio* 41 (5): 479–89.
- Fernandini, F. and Der, L. (Eds) 2016. *Archaeology of Entanglement*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.
- Fleisher, J. 2010. 'Rituals of consumption and the politics of feasting on the eastern African coast, AD 700–1500'. *Journal of World Prehistory* 23 (4): 195–217.
- Fleisher, J. and LaViolette, A. 1999. 'Elusive wattle-and-daub: finding the hidden majority in the archaeology of the Swahili'. *Azania* 34: 87–108.
- Fleisher, J., Lane, P., LaViolette, A., Horton, M., Pollard, E., Quintana Morales, E., *et al.* 2015. 'When did the Swahili become maritime?' *American Anthropologist*, 117 (1): 100–15.
- Fosbrooke, H. 1957. 'Early Iron Age sites in Tanganyika relative to traditional history'. In *Proceedings of the Third Pan-African Congress on Prehistory, Livingstone, 1955*, edited by J. D. Clark, 318–25. London: Chatto & Windus.
- Giblin, J. 1992. *The Politics of Environmental Control in Northeastern Tanzania, 1840–1940*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Gonzales, R. 2009. *Societies, Religion, and History: Central East Tanzanians and the World They Created, c. 200 bce to 1800 ce*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Haaland, R. and Msuya, C. 2000. 'Pottery production, iron working, and trade in the EIA:

- the case of Dakawa, east central Tanzania'. *Azania* 35: 75–106.
- Håkansson, N. T. 1998. 'Rulers and rainmakers in precolonial South Pare, Tanzania: exchange and ritual experts in political centralization'. *Ethnology* 37 (3): 263–83.
- Helm, R. 2000. 'Conflicting histories: the archaeology of iron-working, farming communities in the central and southern coast of Kenya'. PhD diss., University of Bristol.
- Helm, R. 2004. 'Re-evaluating traditional histories on the coast of Kenya: an archaeological perspective'. In *African Historical Archaeologies*, edited by A. Reid and P. Lane, 59–89. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum.
- Helm, R., Crowther, A., Shipton, C., Tengeza, A., Fuller, D. and Boivin, N. 2012. 'Exploring agriculture, interaction and trade on the eastern African littoral: preliminary results from Kenya'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 47 (1): 39–63.
- p.400
- Horton, M. 1987. 'The Swahili corridor'. *Scientific American* 257 (Sept.): 86–93.
- Horton, M. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Kiriama, H., Mchulla, M., Ghandi, G. and Wanyama, P. 2006. 'Excavations at Kaya Bate: an ancient Mijikenda settlement'. In *The African Archaeology Network: Research in Progress*, edited by J. Kinahan and J. Kinahan, 167–81. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press.
- Kusimba, C. 1999. *The Rise and Fall of Swahili States*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira.
- Kusimba, C. 2009. 'Landscape at two scales: economy and trade in East Africa'. In *Politics and Power: Archaeological Perspectives on the Landscapes of Early States*, edited by S. Falconer and C. Redman, 163–78. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Kusimba, C. and Killick, D. 2003. 'Iron Age ironworking on the Swahili coast of Kenya'. In *East African Archaeology: Foragers, Potters, Smiths, and Traders*, edited by C. Kusimba and S. Kusimba, 99–116. Philadelphia: MASCA, University Museum of Pennsylvania.
- Kusimba, C. and Kusimba, S. 2000. 'Hinterlands and cities: archaeological investigations of economy and trade in Tsavo, southeastern Kenya'. *Nyame Akuma* 54: 13–24.
- Kusimba, C. and Kusimba, S. 2005. 'Mosaics and interactions: East Africa, 2000 bp to the present'. In *African Archaeology: A Critical Introduction*, edited by A. Stahl, 392–419. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Kusimba, C., Kusimba, S. and Dussubieux, L. 2013. 'Beyond the coastalscapes: preindustrial social and political networks in East Africa'. *African Archaeological Review* 30 (4): 399–426.

- Lane, P. 2011. 'Slavery and slave trading in eastern Africa: exploring the intersections of historical sources and archaeological evidence'. In *Comparative Dimensions of Slavery in Africa: Archaeology and Memory*, edited by P. Lane and K. MacDonald, 281–314. London: British Academy.
- LaViolette, A. and Fleisher, J. 2005. 'The archaeology of sub-Saharan urbanism: cities and their countrysides'. In *African Archaeology: A Critical Introduction*, edited by A. Stahl, 327–52. Oxford: Blackwell.
- LaViolette, A., Fawcett, W. B., Karoma, N. J. and Schmidt, P. R. 1989. 'The coast and the hinterland: University of Dar es Salaam Archaeological Field Schools, 1987–88'. *Nyame Akuma* 32: 38–46.
- Mapunda, B. 2008. 'The Indian Ocean and its hinterland during the Iron Age: evidence for socio-cultural interactions from southern Tanzania'. *Journal of Indian Ocean Archaeology* 5: 85–96.
- Mapunda, B., Mturi, A., Kessy, E., Matao, S., Bushozi, P. and Chami, R. 2003. *The Archaeology of the Mid-Ruvu Basin: Revealing the Myths and Realities about the Relationship Between the Coast and the Hinterland*. Archaeological Contributions to the University of Dar es Salaam, Occ. Paper 2. Dar es Salaam: Perimiho.
- Mitchell, P. 2005. *African Connections: An Archaeological Perspective on Africa and the Wider World*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira.
- Mutoro, H. 1987. 'An archaeological study of the Mijikenda Kaya settlements on the hinterland Kenya coast'. PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles.
- Mutoro, H. 1998. 'Precolonial trading systems of the East African interior'. In *Transformations in Africa: Essays on Africa's Later Past*, edited by G. Connah, 186–203. Leicester: Leicester University Press.
- Nurse, D. and Spear, T. 1985. *The Swahili: Reconstructing the History and Language of an African Society, 800–1500*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Oka, R., Kusimba, C. and Gogte, V. D. 2009. 'Where others fear to trade: modeling adaptive resilience in ethnic trading networks to famines, maritime warfare and imperial stability in the growing Indian Ocean economy, ca. 1500–1700 CE'. In *The Political Economy of Hazards and Disasters*, edited by E. Jones and A. Murphy, 201–40. Lanham: AltaMira.
- Pawlowicz, M. 2012. 'Modelling the Swahili past: the archaeology of Mikindani in southern coastal Tanzania'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 47 (4): 488–508.
- Pawlowicz, M. and LaViolette, A. 2013. 'Swahili historical chronicles from an archaeological perspective: bridging history, archaeology, coast, and hinterland in southern Tanzania'. In *The Death of Prehistory*, edited by P. Schmidt and S. Mrozowski. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pearson, M. 1998. *Port Cities and Intruders: The Swahili Coast, India and Portugal in the Early Modern Era*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

- Pikirayi, I. 2001. *The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and Decline of Southern Zambebian States*. Lanham: AltaMira.
- Posnansky, M. 1975. 'Connections between Lacustrine peoples and the coast'. In *East Africa and the Orient: Cultural Synthesis in Pre-colonial Times*, edited by N. Chittick and R. Rotberg, 216–25. New York: Africana Publishing.
- Pouwels, R. 1999. 'East African coastal history'. *Journal of African History* 40: 285–96.
- Prestholdt, J. 2008. *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Reid, A. 1991. 'Evidence for ivory bead manufacture and other beads from excavations at Ntusi, southern Uganda'. *Bead Study Trust Newsletter* 18: 1–2.
- Robertshaw, P. 1994. 'Archaeological survey, ceramic analysis, and state formation in western Uganda'. *African Archaeological Review* 12: 105–31.
- Robertshaw, P. 1997. 'Munsa earthworks: a preliminary report on recent excavations'. *Azania* 32: 1–20.
- Schortman, E. and Urban, P. 2004. 'Modeling the roles of craft production in ancient political economies'. *Journal of Archaeological Research* 12: 185–226.
- Schmidt, P. 2016. 'Historical archaeology in East Africa: past practice and future directions'. *Journal of African History* 57 (2): 183–94.
- Schmidt, P. and Walz, J. 2007. 'Re-representing African pasts through historical archaeology'. *American Antiquity*, 72: 53–70.
- Schmidt, P. N., Karoma, N. J., Fawcett, B., LaViolette, A., Mabulla, A., Rutabanzibwa, L. and Saanane, C. 1992. *Archaeological Investigations in the Vicinity of Mkiu, Kisarawe District, Tanzania*. Archaeological Contributions of the University of Dar es Salaam, Occasional Paper No. 1. Archaeology Unit, University of Dar es Salaam.
- Sheriff, A. 1987. *Slaves, Spices, and Ivory in Zanzibar: Integration of an East African Empire into One World Economy, 1771–1873*. London: James Currey.
- Shipton, C., Boivin, N., Crowther, A., Austin, P. and Fuller, D. Q. 2013. 'Intersections, networks and the genesis of social complexity on the Nyali coast of East Africa'. *African Archaeological Review* 30 (4): 427–53.
- Sinclair, P. 1991. 'Archaeology in East Africa: an overview of current chronological issues'. *Journal of African History* 32 (2): 179–219.
- Sinclair, P. and Håkansson, T. 2000. 'The Swahili city-state culture'. In *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures*, edited by M. Hansen, 463–82. Copenhagen: Royal Danish Academy of Science and Letters.
- Smith, M. 2014. 'The archaeology of urban landscapes'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 43: 307–23.

- Soper, R. 1967. 'Iron Age sites in north-eastern Tanzania'. *Azania* 2: 19–38.
- Spear, T. 2000. 'Early Swahili history reconsidered'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 33: 257–90.
- Stiles, D. 1992. 'The ports of East Africa, the Comoros and Madagascar: their place in Indian Ocean trade from 1–1500 AD'. *Kenya Past and Present* 24: 27–36.
- Sutton, J. 1973. *Early Trade in Eastern Africa*. Nairobi: East African Publishing House.
- Sutton, J. 1994/5. 'East Africa: interior and coast'. *Azania* 29/30: 227–31.
- Thorbahn, P. 1979. 'The precolonial ivory trade of East Africa: reconstruction of a human–elephant ecosystem'. PhD diss., University of Massachusetts.
- Unomah, A. and Webster, J. 1976. 'East Africa: the expansion of commerce'. In *Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 5, edited by J. Flint, 270–318. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Walsh, M. 1992/3. 'The Vuna and Degere: remnants and outcasts among the Duruma and Digo of Kenya and Tanzania'. *Bulletin of the International Committee on Urgent Anthropological and Ethnological Research* 34/34: 133–47.
- Walz, J. 2005. 'Mombo and the Mkomazi corridor'. In *Salvaging Tanzania's Cultural Heritage*, edited by B. Mapunda and P. Msemwa, 198–213. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press.
- Walz, J. 2010. 'Route to a regional past: an archaeology of the lower Pangani (Ruvu) Basin, Tanzania, 500–1900 CE'. PhD diss., University of Florida.
- Walz, J. 2013. 'Routes to history'. In *The Death of Prehistory*, edited by P. Schmidt and S. Mrozowski, 69–91. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Walz, J. 2015. 'Zigua medicine, between mountains and ocean: people, performances, and objects in healing motion'. In *Histories of Medicine and Healing in the Indian Ocean World*, Vol. 2, edited by A. Winterbottom and F. Tesfaye, 197–218. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Walz, J. 2016. 'African power plays: inland beads, shells and shell beads in Tanzania, AD 700–1350'. Paper presented at 81st Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, April 9, Orlando, Florida.
- Walz, J. and Dussubieux, L. 2016. 'Zhizo Series glass beads at Kwa Mgogo, inland NE Tanzania'. *Journal of African Archaeology* 14 (1): 99–101.

p.402

- Walz, J. and Odunga, S. 2004. 'Report on archaeological research and mitigation at Gonja Maore, Eastern Kilimanjaro region, Tanzania, 2003'. Unpublished Report, Department of Antiquities, National Museum of Tanzania.
- Wilding, R. 1980. 'The desert trade of eastern Ethiopia'. In *Proceedings of the 8th Panafrikan Congress on Prehistory and Related Studies*, edited by R. Leakey and B. Ogot, 379–80.

Nairobi: Louis Leakey Memorial Institute for African Prehistory.

Wood, M. 2011. *Interconnections: Glass Beads and Trade in Southern and Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean, 7th to 16th centuries ad.* Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis.

Wood, M., Panighello, S., Orsega, E. F., Robertshaw, P., van Elteren, J. T., Crowther, A., *et al.* 2016. 'Zanzibar and Indian Ocean trade in the first millennium CE: the glass bead evidence'. *Anthropological and Archaeological Sciences*, doi:10.1007/s12520-015-0310-z.

Wright, H. 1993. 'Trade and politics on the eastern littoral of Africa, AD 800–1300'. In *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns*, edited by T. Shaw, P. Sinclair, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, 658–72. London: Routledge.

Wynne-Jones, S. and Fleisher, J. 2015. 'Fifty years in the archaeology of the eastern African coast: a methodological history'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 50 (4): 519–41.

Wynne-Jones, S. and Fleisher, J. 2016. 'The multiple territories of Swahili urban landscapes'. *World Archaeology* 48 (3): 349–62.

37

MOSAICS

Rethinking African connections in Coastal and Hinterland Kenya

Chapurukha M. Kusimba and Sibel B. Kusimba

Introduction

For two millennia, societies in eastern and southeastern Africa have been engaged in Indian Ocean maritime trade. The shaping of identities accruing from trade and interaction across the Indian Ocean gave rise to and informed the culture and history of the Swahili. For many early archaeologists, the Swahili were theorised to be mere recipients of external change or were even imagined as immigrants themselves. Today the tension between external and internal change factors continues, but the transformative role of trade and technology in the evolution of Swahili society is now widely accepted (Kusimba *et al.* 1994; LaViolette and Fleisher 2005)

Many scholars attribute the rise of Swahili polities, with clearly defined hierarchies and differential wealth, to increased interaction with foreign merchants. Others have espoused the view that local agency was a primary source of inspiration and change. The struggle to overcome this binary vision has a long history. In our work we have proposed two perspectives to counter the external/internal duality: first, the concept of mosaics; and second, the idea of scales of interaction – local, regional and trans-continental. In this chapter we revisit these two concepts and provide examples of how we have applied them to understanding the Swahili as a regional phenomenon, as the product of human agencies and interactions at many scales, rather than as a coastal culture or ‘maritime society’ (Kusimba and Kusimba 2005; Kusimba *et al.* 2013; cf. Fleisher *et al.* 2015).

In this chapter we summarise our findings from five seasons of fieldwork conducted in the Tsavo National Park and the Mount Kasigau area (Map 1, p. xxii), where we unearthed more than 250 new archaeological sites in a region previously presumed to be too inhospitable for human settlement. Our radiocarbon dates establish human presence

here in the early Holocene, around 12,000 years ago. By the last millennium a mosaic of interactions developed among Tsavo's peoples, who pursued different but complementary food-procurement and economic strategies in a harsh but not uninhabitable environment. The data recovered here illustrate that the origins of material culture, so intrinsic to the archaeological definition of Swahili culture, was equally as terrestrial as it was maritime.

p.404

Mosaics, boundaries and interactions

Some theoretical preface is in order. Mosaics are characterised by overlapping distributions of material culture, representing interactions of groups in many different spheres of life. The resulting distributions are complicated to understand for African archaeology which, historically speaking, has taken its primary goal as the description of normative patterns in the ways of life of discrete peoples (Hodder 1977). In defining ethnic groups, archaeologists have been concerned with two major labels: language affiliation and subsistence economy. Historical linguistics has examined change in every aspect of culture that is mirrored in word histories of African languages, identifying inheritance and borrowing through cognate words and reconstructing the prototypes of modern languages and their dates of origin (Ehret 1998). Archaeologists, in turn, have used dating, geographic location and pottery style to match archaeological occurrences to proto-language families. Studies in mosaics often seek to unravel identities of the likely ancestors of ethnographic peoples using pottery types and linguistic data (Ambrose 1982; Robertshaw and Collett 1983; Huffman 1982, 1989; Ehret 1998).

Another way in which social units have been identified archaeologically is through data on subsistence economies. For many anthropological schools, the principal classification of human societies has been by their mode of subsistence: hunting and gathering, pastoralism, horticulture, or agriculture. This long-held classification system has assumed that the way in which food is procured or produced has a significant effect on other aspects of a culture; for example, hunting and band-level organisation are thought to co-occur (Roscoe 2002). Archaeologists' economic focus is based on inventories of fauna, flora, lithics and ceramics, combined with or compared with linguistic data. The economic approach to labelling archaeological units has been particularly useful in eastern African archaeology, which is well suited to produce data about ecology and economy.

In African archaeology, ethnic and especially linguistic boundaries have been read in pottery-style distributions and plant and animal remains of prehistoric economies, even though the archaeological cultures or traditions are found over much larger areas than are usually occupied by modern ethnic groups. Nevertheless, the dominant approach to mosaics has been to match archaeological groupings to the major linguistic/ethnic

categorisations of twentieth-century eastern Africa. Some important examples include Ambrose (1982, 1984, 1986) and Ehret (1998). Ethnoarchaeologists have described the ethnic dynamics of pottery and material culture in action (Herbich 1987; Hodder 1977, 1982; Nangendo 1994). Our research essentially follows on the path of these earlier studies but relies on historical data as well.

Barth (1969) developed an ecological analogy for understanding ethnic mosaics. For Barth, the ecological diversity of a region set the range of possibilities for how communities would organise themselves in order to make a living. He described four kinds of relationships that groups would have with one another. Symbiosis involved groups developing a mutually beneficial relationship; conflict was a state of contested claims to resources; avoidance prevented both competition and cooperation; and segmentary opposition allowed closely related but competing groups to avoid interaction. Most often, a mosaic of communities might use a combination of these practices in playing out interaction over time. Ethnicity emerges from such interactions and negotiations. In Barth's view ethnicity was a by-product of the signalling of negotiated distinctions and was reflected in the elaboration of difference in material culture. Similar studies of ethnic boundaries in living or historical cultures have shown that material differences are elaborated precisely when and where interaction is greatest.

Boundaries are shaped by interaction – a real paradox and a challenge to the common-sense assumptions that archaeologists make when interpreting material culture. While we can read an ethnic boundary, we would be wrong – in fact, completely inverted – to see that boundary as isolation or rupture. In fact boundaries are shaped, sustained and signalled by interactions across them. Yet boundaries are routinely read in contrasting material culture of ethnic groups in contact. What, instead, if we saw such contrasts as interaction and flows?

p.405

Barth's perspective on ethnicity has been important for archaeologists attempting to interpret variation in material culture. Ethnic, and especially linguistic, boundaries have been read in pottery-style distributions and plant and animal remains of prehistoric economies (Ambrose 1984; Kusimba and Kusimba 2005). These archaeological boundaries are generally much larger than present-day distribution of historically recorded ethnic groups. Debate over the meaning of ethnic differences in the archaeological record continues. Do these boundaries relate to language families, to the early stages of migrations of people with distinct material culture from elsewhere, to differences in economic specialisation around hunting and gathering, pastoralism or farming and the mix of these three strategies?

In general there still remains confusion over ethnicity itself. How important was it as a form of identity and as a way of structuring interactions? In the Central Rift Valley, a variety of scholars have drawn attention to the very different forms of identity that may

have been more important than ethnicity. People may have identified with a much smaller group, including families, kin and local area; people cultivated contacts and alliances with others; clans and families, because of distinct ritual knowledge, could move across and between groups too. Individuals had many axes of identification other than ethnicity. It was, as Ambler (1988: 32) calls it, ‘a complex world of overlapping, layered, and shifting associations’. Of course ethnicity can emerge internally without reference to an ‘other’; and culture differentiates internally as groups within it differentiate themselves. Finally, cultural distinctiveness can also mean – and often does mean – that two societies did not interact. Sometimes a boundary really is a boundary. So what is an archaeologist to do then? The mosaics approach, then, is well suited to eastern Africa but, like all interpretive tools, potentially flawed. A more empirical and flexible approach might be that of scales of interaction.

Scales of interaction

The scales of interaction approach arises from the hypothesis that no single region in the world is completely self-sufficient and must build networks of interaction with other regions to enable it to access resources that are crucial to its daily existence and productivity. Thus we hypothesise that Swahili urbanism was a product of trade networks on local, regional and international levels, and must be understood from a multi-scalar perspective. This perspective requires us to examine the archaeological record as evidence for nodes of interactions that incorporate all regions as a proxy for understanding and making sense of long-term perspectives on change at local, regional and extra-regional scales. It is only by analysing data from many sites within different ecological zones and regions that we are able to address questions such as: ‘how and in what ways did the specific geographical location of coastal society influence its character?’ ‘How did emergent urban polities respond to local, regional and trans-continental crises?’ ‘How and in what ways were they vulnerable or immune to external factors?’ And ‘how did they in turn influence and shape these same factors?’

Eastern Africa in the last two millennia: mosaics and interactions

Swahili culture is a product of interaction at all such imbricated scales, and its development was affected by all of these scales. We should point out that some have found shortcomings in applying the mosaic approach to the complex history of interactions among eastern African peoples. Currently, debate rages over the correct application of terms and identification of groups among the ‘agriculturalist’, ‘hunter-gatherer’ and ‘pastoralist’ societies composing the mosaic. Some deny that identifying ‘hunter-gatherers’

versus food producers is a simple matter of assessment of site contents, such as proportions of wild to domestic cattle (Schrire and Deacon 1989; Morrison 2002; Mapunda 2003; Sadr 2003; but see Terrell *et al.* 2003). Most ancient economies were significantly less specialised than ethnographically known ones, and likely exchanged foodstuffs. Schrire (1992), for example, has pointed out that many regional site inventories form a continuum when proportions of wild/domestic fauna, pottery, lithic artefacts and other artefact types are considered. For other scholars, however, ethnic groups and economic specialisations can be legitimately deduced from site location, technology and economy. For example, in southern Africa scholars have argued that hunter-gatherer sites can be clearly separated from those of food producers based on location in a rockshelter or the absence of pottery or iron artefacts. For others, the complex history of interaction and exchange makes differences difficult to discern (Schrire 1992). Identifying the tiles of the mosaic is a problem whose solution may rest on new techniques of identification, for example pottery sourcing, as well as the use of historical documents (Sadr 2003).

p.406

The Tsavo mosaic

Our research in the Tsavo region has sought to understand the history of interactions, economy, and ecology among Tsavo's diverse peoples, including their relationships with their coastal neighbours. The historic peoples of the Tsavo include the Warta, understood to be peripatetic foragers; the Satiata agriculturalists of the terraced uplands of the Taita Hills; the Wayamba agropastoralists; and the Oromo pastoralists who had an origin in present-day Ethiopia and Eritrea. The Satiata also speak of the Wambisha pastoralists, whom they assimilated and displaced upon their arrival in the sixteenth century.

A regional approach encompasses understanding the nature of relationships that existed between towns, their rural neighbours and those of the most economically crucial trading partner – the interior. Since 1997, our research in the Tsavo region, 150 km west of the Kenyan coast, has illustrated the complementary and intertwined networks that characterised the Swahili world. Data derived from archaeological surveys and excavations, ethnohistorical evidence and ethnoarchaeological research reveal that Tsavo inhabitants pursued complementary economic strategies and maintained a high degree of trade and movement across community identities in spite of ethnic boundaries (Prins 1967; Ehret and Nurse 1981). Our surveys identified 250 new archaeological sites in addition to 150 described by the late Frederick Thorbahn (1979). These sites fall into macro patterns, namely residential, mortuary, extractive, economic (agricultural terraces, irrigation canals, meat drying and trade), and fugitive stockades discussed in detail elsewhere (Kusimba *et al.* 2005, 2013).

Residential sites

Residential sites included open-air hunter-gatherer, rock shelter, cave and sedentary settlements. As in other regions in Africa, open-air hunter-gatherer settlements were marked by extensive cup-shaped hollows that could be found in almost all prominent low inselbergs and on rocks along seasonal springs and rivers. These hollows ranged from a handful to several hundred. Many represented food-processing activities such as grinding cereals and roots, and skin tanning; others bore evidence of recreational use and were likely precursors of the African *baò* game. Still others may have been used as symbolic markers (David 1998). Hobley (1895) wrote that Tsavo's prominent inselbergs were used historically as regional market centres attracting peoples from the wider region. Regional trade and exchange in bush and agricultural products are known to have occurred at inselbergs, such as the prominent Mudanda Rock in Tsavo East and the Rhino Valley Rock in Tsavo West (each almost 1 km long). At Mudanda, large quantities of chert and quartz stone tools were found, although construction of a waterhole had disturbed these finds. The Rhino Valley Rock area contained over 300 cup-shaped hollows of different sizes and shapes, showing the diversity of economic activities carried out at this locality. Future excavations will target these areas for testing the hypothesis concerning their role as centres for interregional trade and exchange, as well as determining clear chronological relationships.

p.407

Full coverage survey of Tsavo will doubtless recover hundreds of rockshelters and caves. Tsavo rockshelters and caves were used as seasonal residential areas and ephemeral campsites for hunter-gatherers, but some of the shelters were used for highly specialised activities, including as ancestral shrines or armouries for the community's weaponry. Many were associated with rainmaking and, from the eighteenth century, increasingly served as stockades for defence during times of stress and warfare. Later many became areas for penning and pen-feeding of livestock (Kusimba 2004, 2009).

Agricultural landscapes

Our surveys recovered terraced settlements and fields similar to those at Engaruka and in Pokot (Sutton 1998; Bollig 2006; Davies 2012). Mount Kasigau's entire hillslope contained a complex maze of terraced fields, as did Ngulia Hills. These fields run across ridges sculpted by seasonal springs, streams and small rivers. Each ridge contained extended family houses and the fields where they sowed sorghum, millet, beans, pumpkins and, later, maize. Local village elders maintain that each lineage occupied several terraces adjacent to each other. Elders we interviewed emphasised that the system of land tenure recognised individual rights to terraced land. Abandoned and/or poorly maintained terraces endangered neighbouring terraces, and thus would have been leased to individuals or families in need of land. In later years, these terraces suffered neglect as people

relocated.

Mortuary and ritual sites

Mortuary sites including graves, cemeteries, cairns and skull interment sites occur widely in the Tsavo region (Lugard 1959: 261; Soper 1965: 4, 1976; Thorbahn 1979; Kusimba *et al.* 2005). Thorbahn (1979: 210–11) attributed burial cairns to Oromo pastoralists, who inhabited Tsavo's arid plains until it was designated a national park in 1948 (cf. Gregory [1968] 1896: 325). Local Taita informants have variously attributed cairns to the Wambisha and Oromo (Soper 1965). Lone graves marked by stones along known trade routes are often attributed to Arab, Swahili and other caravan traders and porters. We assume that slave captives who succumbed along the way – victims of thirst, disease and a host of other agents of death – were rarely buried. Skull sites in the region are attributed to the Taita.

Our team discovered eight cranial-display niche sites with skull remains. Taita interment sites were located close to villages in outlying rock shelters, rock crevices and shallow coves. The shelters for the ancestors were placed in dry and quiet places that were in close proximity to inhabited areas, so that they could be maintained and protected from predators as well as witches. Ancestors were regularly propitiated in order for them to ward off potential calamities and crises like drought, disease, childlessness and witchcraft. At one in Saghala, a nearby large rock was used as an altar for preparing gifts to present to ancestors. Large partially broken pots and gourds found at interment sites provided evidence for the ceremonial feasting that occurred at these sites.

p.408

Sites of production

Extractive economies, including stone-tool making, iron smelting and smithing, salt making and mining, played a key role in the regional and extra-regional economy. Tsavo had abundant ores and wood charcoal to sustain major iron-working industrial complexes. One such region was Kasigau, where we recovered three large iron-working sites at Rukanga, Bungule and Kirongwe. These sites were approximately one hectare each, and were centres of intensive iron production at a time that coincided with the growth of trade on the coast. They were located in rockshelters. A stratigraphic sequence of nine radiocarbon dates move from the present back to 1150 ± 70 bp at Kirongwe 1, hereafter K1 (Kusimba *et al.* 2005). Furnace technology was primarily comprised of bowl furnaces. Our survey and subsequent excavations of smelting sites at Kirongwe recovered five smelting furnaces at a single site. The recovery of a smithy at K1 revealed multiple uses of the rockshelter for residence and craft activities, including smithing. Excavated artefacts at rockshelters K1 and K2, including a stone anvil, a large volume of tuyere fragments, slag and both finished and unfinished iron tools, attest to the complexity of iron production in

Tsavo. Significant volumes of slag and slag-wetted tuyeres recovered relate to the most intensive iron smelting occurring from 1150 ± 70 to 840 ± 70 bp. It is significant to note that major changes have occurred during the last 500 years: the reappearance of stone tools use at these sites indicate reoccupation of the site by a group possessing an expedient technology. Elsewhere in Tsavo, at Kisio Rock shelter, a similar quartz-stone tool industry is associated with wild fauna and abundant beads of stone and shell (Kusimba, S. 2003). In the upper levels of K1, a stone tool-using group left abundant trade beads, which included post-sixteenth century European beads (Dussubieux *et al.* 2008).

Kasigau's iron industry probably supplied tools needed for farm work and for killing elephants and rhinoceros when demand for ivory increased in Asia. Taita and Sanye elders point out that Kasigau iron's primary clientele were the professional hunters who made a living through hunting of elephants and provisioning ivory to coastal merchants, as well as to local farmers.

Stockades

Fugitive stockade sites, including dry-stone rock shelters, cattle and goat pens, are found from the seventeenth century onwards. The majority of these sites are rockshelters and caves that were fortified as responses to declining regional security (Kusimba 2004, 2006). Eighteen out of a total of forty-one rockshelters in Kasigau exhibited some evidence of fortification. The enclosures have large dry-stone wall faces supported by vertical wooden frames. Most sites have two sections: one for people and the other for livestock. They generally have an entrance and exit and, in these cases, both accesses are protected by wooden partitions that run parallel to the wall.

For example, Bungule 20 is a formidable structure measuring 66 m^2 with a ceiling height ranging between 0.30 and 1.75 metres. Three radiocarbon samples obtained from the vines and wood holding the dry-stone wall had uncalibrated radiocarbon ages of 207 ± 40 , 290 ± 70 , 300 ± 70 bp, placing the calibrated date of construction of the wall sometime in the last 400 years at two standard deviations.

Excavations further revealed a detailed process of dry-stone construction. This involved the digging of a foundation and erecting of wooden frame with termite-resistant hardwoods tied with twine. Large rocks would then be piled along the wooden frame from the base foundation, and smaller blocks would be fitted into any open spaces remaining. Finally, clay soil from the termite hills was applied as a plaster seal to ward off insects and the elements. The resulting structure was strong, impenetrable and aesthetically beautiful. The recent date of rampart construction and paucity of cultural artefacts corroborate informants' oral histories indicating that Bungule 20 and other similar rockshelters were fortifications and refugia against slave hunters and others feared by Kasigau people.

The chronology of the Tsavo mosaic

Based on the radiocarbon dates obtained from Tsavo, we reconstructed the chronological history of Tsavo into five major periods (Kusimba *et al.* 2013).

Period 1: Early–Late Holocene (cal. 10,000–3,000 BCE)

This period is derived from Bungule 1, and is characterised by reliance on wild fauna and quartz stone tools; no data are available to support the existence of interactions between Tsavo and the coast at this time.

Period 2: Pastoral Neolithic–Early Iron Working (cal. 3,000–500 BCE)

Represented by the recovery of molars of *Bos taurus* at the riverine sites of Kahinju at $3,870 \pm 330$ years bp (UIC1068) and Kathuva at $3,450 \pm 290$ years bp (UIC921) (Wright 2005). At B9, domesticated cow are present in levels dating to this period, as are beads, some of marine shell and demonstrating contact with the coast. These data show that domesticated animals appear in Tsavo as early as they do in the Central Rift Valley. We recovered no clear evidence of conduct with the coast.

Period 3: Early Iron Working (cal. 500 BCE–1000 CE)

Period 3 is characterised by the introduction of intensive iron production in Tsavo, visible at sites Kirongwe 1–7. The volume of slag is comparable with the scale of smelting industries undertaken at other eastern African sites, including Limbo and Galu (Kusimba 1993; Kusimba *et al.* 1994; Chami 1994; Schmidt 1997; Kusimba and Killick 2003; Mapunda 2003). Kirongwe iron was traded on a regional scale.

Period 4: Late Iron Working (cal. 1000 ce–1500 ce)

This period saw the flourishing of a regional economic system, illustrated by the diversity of site types in Kasigau, Ngulia Hills and Rhino Valley, Konu Moju and Dakota plains. Sites include rockshelters, caves, villages and homesteads, and pastoral villages and camps. The artefacts and features that are noteworthy at this site include dry-stone work around rockshelter livestock pens; terraced farming; trade goods such as ivory and ostrich egg shell, marine and glass beads; and the continued use of stone tools for specialised tasks by many groups, especially the foragers.

Period 5: Colonial (cal. 1500 ce–1900 CE)

This final period covers the abandonment of many settlements in the plains and lower

slopes in preference for hilltops, hillsides and generally hard-to-reach places as favourable areas for settlement. The majority of these sites were fortified. Among the Taita, we witness the emergence of the cult of ancestor veneration (Bravman 1998). We hypothesise that transformation in mortuary behaviours, such as disinterring ancestor skulls, developed in response to decreasing amounts of cultivable land as people became more tethered to the hills. The low volume of artefacts recovered at Period 5 sites points to a decline in interregional trade and craft specialisation. On Kasigau, this period is associated with important evidence of disruption of these mosaics – hilltop refuge sites, often heavily fortified with dry-stone architecture. These fortified rockshelters are a potent reminder of the costs of interactions during the historic period, when the slave and ivory trade became a focus of the caravans.

Mosaics: intertwined relationships between the coast and interior

Both historians and archaeologists have demonstrated the inclusivity of regional trade networks in African economies (Dalton 1977). The recovery of substantial volumes of glass beads at all sites ranging from rockshelters to sedentary residences points to the resilience of coast–hinterland interactions (Dussubieux *et al.* 2008). Warta foragers actively participated in long-distance trade as far as the Kenya coast as specialised hunters and apiculturists who provided ivory, skins, honey, beeswax and other animal products (Muriuki 1974: 100–9). They were also the chief distributors of poison to Akamba and Taita hunters, who revered them for their knowledge of the bush country and tracking skills. Although frequently considered a caste of the Oromo people, they maintain their own identity (Bulcha 2002). Their trading partners included the Arabs, Gujarati Indians, Swahili, Oromo, Giriama and Akamba traders. In exchange for ivory, rhino horns and animal skins, they received cereal, milk products, cloth, shell, glass beads and other products. Warta women were known as specialised apiculturists who collected, processed and peddled honey and beeswax at regional and coastal markets. Beeswax was an important ingredient for hafting arrows and spears and caulking boats and ships and was in high demand all over eastern Africa and beyond.

The high demand for ivory created favourable conditions for the emergence of professional hunters. Warta honed their skills of hunting and tracking elephants and other big game and invented poison so potent it could kill an adult elephant within fifteen minutes. Their superior tracking and hunting skills, potent poison and hunting ethic enabled them to be more selective in their choice of the animals they killed. Informants say that Warta never killed elephants randomly, but rather chose older, mature and mostly male animals as their quarry.

We address these issues via Tables 37.1–37.5. [Table 37.1](#) shows the crucial products in

the domestic economy of the coast and their origins. [Table 37.2](#) lists major exports from eastern Africa to markets in the Indian Ocean. [Table 37.3](#) shows the origins of important valued items in the domestic economy and in the exchange economy with foreign markets. Finally, [Tables 37.4](#) and [37.5](#) show the sources for trade items exported to five different key markets from eastern Africa. Collectively, they illustrate several important points regarding Swahili connections and networks. First, items of value circulated to both the domestic economy and to the export enterprise of the coastal elites. The origins of the Swahili economy, on both local domestic and export levels, were both local and regional in extent. Indeed most of the products important to both local and regional scales were themselves not coastal in origin. The interconnectedness and dependency on multiple sources for valued items and on multiple markets for such items place Swahili polities as part of a network of relationships at all scales.

p.411

[Table 37.1](#) Origins of products important in the domestic economy

	<i>Products</i>	<i>Coastal</i>	<i>Agrarian</i>	<i>Agropastoral</i>	<i>Pastoral</i>	<i>Hunter-gatherers</i>
1	Ambergris	X				
2	Aromatic products	X	X	X	X	X
3	Baobab	X	X	X	X	
4	Beeswax		X	X	X	X
5	Betel nut	X				
6	Butter/yogurt			X	X	
7	Citrus fruits	X	X			
8	Copra	X				
9	Cotton	X				
10	Cotton	X	X			
11	Cowrie shells	X				
12	Enslaved persons	X	X	X	X	X
13	Frankincense				X	X
14	Fresh, dried, smoked fish	X				
15	Gold		X			
16	Grains	X	X	X		
17	Iron bloom	X	X	X		
18	Iron tools	X	X	X		
19	Ivory		X	X	X	X
20	Kapok	X				
21	Leather			X	X	
22	Leopard skins		X	X	X	X
23	Livestock	X		X	X	
24	Mangrove poles	X				
25	Marine beads	X				
26	Myrrh				X	X
27	Ostrich eggs			X	X	X
28	Poison					X
29	Pottery	X	X			
30	Rhinoceros horns		X	X	X	X
31	Rock crystal			X		
32	Salt	X				
33	Sea cucumber	X				
34	Shark fins	X				
35	Tamarind	X	X			
36	Timber		X	X		
37	Tobacco	X	X			
38	Turtle shells	X				X
	Total	25	17	16	13	11

[*Table 37.2*](#) Eastern African exports

<i>African products</i>	<i>Arabia</i>	<i>Persia</i>	<i>India</i>	<i>China</i>	<i>Southeast Asia</i>
1 Ambergris	X	X			
2 Aromatic products	X	X	X	X	X
3 Baobab			X		
4 Beeswax	X	X	X	X	X
5 Betel nut	X	X			
6 Copra	X	X			
7 Cotton	X	X			
8 Enslaved persons	X	X	X		

Table 37.2 (continued)

<i>African products</i>	<i>Arabia</i>	<i>Persia</i>	<i>India</i>	<i>China</i>	<i>Southeast Asia</i>
9 Frankincense	X	X			
10 Fresh, dried, smoked fish	X	X			
11 Gold	X	X	X		
12 Grains	X				
13 Iron bloom			X		
14 Iron tools					
15 Ivory	X	X	X	X	
16 Kapok					
17 Leather					
18 Leopard skins		X	X	X	X
19 Livestock					
20 Mangrove poles	X	X			
21 Marine beads					
22 Myrrh	X	X	X	X	X
23 Pottery					
24 Rhinoceros horns	X	X	X	X	X
25 Sea cucumber	X	X			
26 Shark fins	X	X			
27 Tamarind					
28 Timber	X	X			
29 Turtle shells	X	X			
Total number of products	19	19	10	6	5
Percentage of inventory exported to this zone	32%	32%	17%	10%	9%

[Table 37.3](#) Origins of valued items in the domestic and export economies

	<i>African products</i>	<i>Item of the domestic economy, the export economy, or both?</i>	<i>Coastal in origin, interior in origin, or both?</i>
1	Aromatic products	Both	Both
2	Baobab	Both	Both
3	Enslaved persons	Both	Both
4	Iron bloom	Both	Both
5	Timber	Both	Both
6	Betel nut	Both	Coast
7	Copra	Both	Coast
8	Fresh, dried, smoked fish	Both	Coast
9	Mangrove poles	Both	Coast
10	Salt	Both	Coast
11	Shark fins	Both	Coast
12	Beeswax	Both	Interior
13	Frankincense	Both	Interior
14	Gold	Both	Interior
15	Ivory	Both	Interior
16	Myrrh	Both	Interior
17	Rock crystal	Both	Interior
18	Cotton	Domestic	Both
19	Iron tools	Domestic	Both
20	Pottery	Domestic	Both
21	Tamarind	Domestic	Both
22	Tobacco	Domestic	Both
23	Citrus fruits	Domestic	Coast
24	Cowrie shells	Domestic	Coast
25	Kapok	Domestic	Coast
26	Marine beads	Domestic	Coast
27	Butter/yogurt	Domestic	Interior
28	Grains	Domestic	Interior
29	Leather	Domestic	Interior
30	Livestock	Domestic	Interior
31	Ostrich eggs	Domestic	Interior
32	Poison	Domestic	Interior
33	Sea cucumber	Export	Coast
34	Turtle shells	Export	Coast
35	Ambergris	Export	Coast
36	Leopard skins	Export	Interior
37	Rhinoceros horns	Export	Interior

[*Table 37.4*](#) Foreign markets for trade items from the eastern African coast

	<i>African products</i>	<i>Arabia</i>	<i>Persia</i>	<i>India</i>	<i>China</i>	<i>Southeast Asia</i>	<i>Number of markets</i>
1	Ambergris	X	X				2
2	Aromatic products	X	X	X	X	X	5
3	Baobab			X			1
4	Beeswax	X	X	X	X	X	5
5	Betel nut						0
6	Butter/yogurt						0
7	Citrus fruits						0
8	Copra	X	X				2
9	Cotton	X	X				2
10	Cowrie shells						0
11	Enslaved persons	X	X	X			3
12	Frankincense	X	X				3
13	Fresh, dried, smoked fish	X	X				2
14	Gold	X	X	X			3
15	Grains	X					13
16	Iron bloom			X			13
17	Iron tools						0
18	Ivory	X	X	X	X	X	5
19	Kapok						0
20	Leather						0
21	Leopard skins		X	X	X	X	5
22	Livestock						0
23	Mangrove poles	X	X				2
24	Marine beads						0
25	Myrrh	X	X	X	X	X	5
26	Ostrich eggs						0
27	Poison						0
28	Pottery						0
29	Rhinoceros horns	X	X	X	X	X	5
30	Rock crystal	X					1
31	Salt						0
32	Sea cucumber	X	X				2
33	Shark fins	X	X				2
34	Tamarind						0
35	Timber	X	X				2
36	Tobacco						0
37	Turtle shells	X	X				2
	Total	19	18	10	6	6	

[*Table 37.5*](#) Products exported to five different markets – Arabia, Persia, India, China, and Southeast Asia

<i>Product</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Main suppliers</i>
Aromatic products	Coast and interior	Pastoralists
Beeswax	Interior	Specialised hunters
Ivory	Interior	Specialised hunters and pastoralists, and agropastoralists
Leopard skins	Interior	Specialised hunters
Rhinoceros horns	Interior	Specialised hunters

To explain the social basis of this network, one looks to interpersonal relationships. The richness of the Swahili material assemblage was built on person-to-person relationships. Over time a managerial elite came to dominate and profit from the regional and transoceanic economy. Trade and other opportunities spawned subsidiary craft specialisation enterprises. These would include iron smelting and blacksmithing to provision hunters, herders, miners, farmers and warriors; poison making to provision hunters and warriors; basket making to provision caravan traders and porters; potting and grindstone carving to provision farmers, hunter gatherers and herders.

Between 1400 and 1600 CE Kasigau in Tsavo served as a major distribution centre for local and regional trade, as well as a lodging and camping ground for interior and coastal long-distance traders (Wakefield 1870). Trade items exchanged at Kasigau and other such centres included beads, cloth, textiles, honey and beeswax, fresh fruits, milk, ivory, rhinoceros horn, animal skins, among others. The introduction of coastal crops like coconuts, tamarind, oranges, lemons and mangoes in Kasigau was in part a response to the trade boom and the high demand for such products among coastal traders. Everyone in the Tsavo region and beyond appears to have been involved in regional trade (Smee and Hardy 1811: 176). The area demonstrates the importance of a regional perspective on diverse ethnic and economic mosaics and the trade in local products like iron, honey, buttermilk and poison. Trade beads and marine shells that are found in far hinterland sites demonstrate regional contact with the coast. The presence of refuge sites (Kusimba 2006) attests to the widespread insecurity and collapse engendered by the colonisation of the East African coast and the rise of the slave trade. The cultural mosaic of Tsavo as we describe it here was profoundly shaped by interaction with the Swahili coast; and vice versa.

Thus, we want to reiterate that Swahili urbanism, being a product of trade networks on local, regional and international levels, requires a mosaic perspective to understand it. Through this approach we have gained an appreciation of the contributions of multiple segments of society that are so often left out in archaeological accounts of Swahili urbanism. As we show in Tables 37.1–37.5, the evolution of the Swahili world was based on an assemblage of people, artefacts, interactions and relationships of trust and exchange at scales both interpersonal and institutional. Interacting communities and regions were each endowed with unique spheres of knowledge and resources that nevertheless contributed to the whole. A regional networked approach that draws data from many sites within the different ecological zones and regions can allow systematic comparative analysis

of these changes and social patterns. Regional research has just begun to reveal the productive insights that situate Swahili urbanism within multiple landscapes of interaction.

p.415

Conclusion

Anthropology and archaeology shared the colonial task of labelling and describing African peoples as a patchwork of bounded ethnic groups or tribes, each with an associated language, ecology and economy, and social organisation. African archaeologists could not help but to reinforce the view of cultures as bounded wholes, as they tended to find and recognise normative patterns in the archaeological record that they then linked to present-day ethnic groups. Economy, ecology and linguistics were particularly powerful indices of differences archaeologists used to identify intersections of similar material culture – which have been interpreted as and connected to contemporary examples of economic and linguistic groups. This is not to say that ethnic groups and boundaries are a figment of analysis: far from it. But too often boundaries are assumed to be static walls. Rather, boundaries are means through which interaction actively shapes difference. These boundaries can happen between language and lifeway, or social classes, or among category, gender, religion or other recognised or defined fields of difference. At the same time, there must be some aspects of culture and communication that are shared – what McIntosh (1989) called ‘the reservoir of symbols, myths and beliefs’ through which mediation can happen in mutually agreed upon ways. Even the unity of Swahili society, however this was recognised, was an active process whereby differences and differentiation shaped a society that was increasingly complex internally.

In this chapter we have revisited the idea of mosaics and the concept of scales of interaction and reflected on their usefulness and their limits in understanding Swahili culture. We reiterate that boundaries are a paradox; even though our common sense tells us they indicate rupture and difference they are in fact formed and maintained by the interactions and contacts they mediate. Boundaries point us to interactions (Barth 1969).

The power of a mosaic approach is the paradox of boundaries. Anthropology has demonstrated that crossing a boundary can strengthen the distinctiveness of the two sides. In other words, boundaries can be made through their mediation, through movement and engagement across them. The fact that boundaries are made through the traffic across them is fundamentally at odds with how archaeologists interpret material culture. Almost always, archaeologists tend to read rupture and discontinuity in material culture as evidence of migration, isolation, breach, disconnection – in other words as some kind of difference. We reify over and over the concept of society. What would our interpretations of the archaeological record be if we took the challenge to see rupture, boundaries and

difference as a possible result of – or even as evidence of – interaction itself?

Acknowledgements

Chapurukha M. Kusimba and Sibel B. Kusimba's research in Kenya has generously been supported by the National Museums of Kenya and the Republic of Kenya through research permits and excavation permits: OP/13/001/25C 86; MHE & T 13/001/35C264 and NCST/5/C/002/E/543. The bulk of the research reported here was carried out when Chapurukha was at the Field Museum of Natural History and University of Illinois-Chicago and Sibel was at Northern Illinois University-Dekalb. Generous financial support from the US National Science Foundation SBR 9024683 (1991–3); BCS 9615291 (1996–8); BCS 0106664 (2002–04); BCS 0352681 (2003–04); BCS 0648762 (2007–09); BCS-1030081 (2010–12), the US National Endowment for the Humanities (2012–14), the US IIE J. W. Fulbright Sr. Scholars Program 2002–3, 2012), National Geographic Society (1996–7), Wenner-Gren Foundation (1991) and the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland (1991) have enabled Chapurukha and his colleagues to conduct research in Kenya. We thank Dr George H. O. Abungu, Dr Idle Farah, Dr Purity Kiura, Dr Mzalendo Kibunjia, Angela Kabiru, Ahmed Sheikh Nabhany, Athman Lali and the Mchulla family in Mombasa, Lamu and Faza for their unwavering support over the years.

p.416

References

- Ambler, C. H. 1988. *Kenyan Communities in the Age of Imperialism: Central Region in the Late Nineteenth Century*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Ambrose, S. H. 1982. 'Archaeological and linguistic reconstructions of history in East Africa'. In *The Archaeological and Linguistic Reconstruction of African History*, edited by C. Ehret and M. Posnansky, 104–57. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ambrose, S. H. 1984. 'Introduction of pastoral adaptations to the highlands of East Africa'. In *From Hunters to Farmers*, edited by J. D. Clark and S. Brandt, 212–39. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ambrose, S. H. 1986. 'Hunter-gatherer adaptations to nonmarginal environments: an ecological and archaeological assessment to Dorobo Model'. *Sprache und Geschichte in Afrika* 7: 11–42.
- Barth, F. 1969. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. Bergen: Universitets Forlaget.
- Bolig, M. 2006. *Risk Management in a Hazardous Environment: A Comparative Study of Two Pastoralist Societies*. New York: Springer.

- Bravman, B. 1998. *Making Ethnic Ways: Communities and Their Transformation in Taita, Kenya, 1800–1950*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Bulcha, M. 2002. *The Making of the Oromo Diaspora: A Historical Sociology of Forced Migration*. Minneapolis: Kirk Publishing House.
- Chami, F. 1994. *The Tanzanian Coast in the First Millennium ad: An Archaeology of the Iron-Working, Farming Communities*, Vol. 7. Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis.
- Dalton, G. (Ed.) 1977. *Tribal and Peasant Economies: Readings in Economic Anthropology*, No. 2. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- David, N. 1998. 'The ethnoarchaeology and field archaeology of grinding at Sukur, Adamawa State, Nigeria'. *African Archaeological Review* 15 (1): 13–63.
- Davies, M. I. 2012. 'Some thoughts on a "useable" African archaeology: settlement, population and intensive farming among the Pokot of northwest Kenya'. *African Archaeological Review* 29 (4): 319–53.
- Dussubieux, L., Kusimba, C., Gogte, V., Kusimba, S., Gratuze, B. and Oka, R. 2008. 'The trading of ancient glass beads: new analytical data from South Asian and East African soda-alumina glass beads'. *Archaeometry* 50: 797–821.
- Ehret, C. 1998. *An African Classical Age: Eastern and Southern Africa in World Prehistory, 1000 bc to ad 400*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
- Ehret, C. and Nurse, D. 1981. 'The Taita Cushites'. *Sprache und Geschichte in Afrika* 3: 125–68.
- Fleisher, J., Lane, P., LaViolette, A., Horton, M. C., Pollard, E., Quintana Morales, E., et al. 2015. 'When did the Swahili become maritime?' *American Anthropologist* 117 (1): 100–15.
- Gregory, J. W. [1968] 1896. *The Great Rift Valley, Being the Narrative of a Journey to Mount Kenya and Lake Baringo with Some Account of the Geology, Natural History, Anthropology and Future Prospects of British East Africa*. London: Frank Cass and Co.
- Herbich, I. 1987. 'Learning patterns, potter interaction, and ceramic style among the Luo of Kenya'. *African Archaeological Review* 5: 193–204.
- Hobley, C. W. 1895. 'Upon a visit to Tsavo and the Taita Highlands'. *The Geographical Journal* 5 (6): 545–61.
- Hodder, I. 1977. 'Some new directions in the spatial analysis of archaeological data at the regional scale (macro)'. In *Spatial Archaeology*, edited by David L. Clarke, 223–351. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hodder, I. 1982. *Symbols in Action: Ethnoarchaeological Studies of Material Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Huffman, T. 1982. 'Archaeology and ethnohistory of the African Iron Age'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 11: 133–50.

- Huffman, T. 1989. 'Ceramics, settlements, and late Iron Age migrations'. *African Archaeological Review* 7: 155–82.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1993. 'The archaeology and ethnography of iron metallurgy of the Kenya coast'. PhD diss., Bryn Mawr College.
- Kusimba, C. M. 2004. 'The archaeology of slavery in East Africa'. *African Archaeological Review* 21: 59–88.
- Kusimba, C. M. 2006. 'Warfare in African chiefdoms'. In *Violent Transformations: The Archaeology of Warfare and Long-Term Social Change*, edited by E. Arkush and M. Allen, 214–49. Gainesville: University of Florida Press.
- Kusimba, C. M. 2009. 'Landscape at two scales: economy and trade in East Africa'. In *Politics and Power: Archaeological Perspectives on the Landscapes of Early States*, edited by S. E. Falconer and C. L. Redman, 163–78. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Kusimba, C. M. and Killick, D. 2003. 'Iron production on the Swahili coast'. In *East African Archaeology*, edited by C. M. Kusimba and S. B. Kusimba, 99–116. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Kusimba, C. M. and Kusimba, S. B. 2005. 'Mosaics and interactions: East Africa, 2000 bp to the present'. In *African Archaeology. A Critical Introduction*, edited by A. B. Stahl, 392–419. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Kusimba, C. M. and Oka, R. 2009. 'Trade and polity in East Africa: re-examining elite strategies for acquiring power'. In *The Changing Worlds of Atlantic Africa*, edited by T. Falola and Matt D. Childs, 39–60. Durham: Carolina Academic Press.
- Kusimba, C. M., Killick, D. J. and Cresswell, R. G. 1994. 'Indigenous and imported metals at Swahili sites on the coast of Kenya'. *Society, Culture, and Technology in Africa* 11: 63–77.
- Kusimba, C. M., Kusimba, S. B. and Wright, D. K. 2005. 'The development and collapse of precolonial ethnic mosaics in Tsavo, Kenya'. *Journal of African Archaeology* 3 (2): 243–65.
- Kusimba, C. M., Kusimba, S. B. and Dussubieux, L. 2013. 'Beyond the coastalscapes: preindustrial social and political networks in East Africa'. *African Archaeological Review* 30: 399–426.
- Kusimba, S. B. 2003. *African Foragers: Environment, Technology, Interactions*. Walnut Creek: Rowman AltaMira.
- LaViolette, A. and Fleisher, J. 2005. 'The archaeology of sub-Saharan urbanism: cities and their countrysides'. In *African Archaeology: A Critical Introduction*, edited by A. Stahl, 392–419. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Lugard, F. D. 1959. *The Diaries of Lord Lugard, Volume 1. East Africa, Nov. 1889–Dec. 1890*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Mapunda, B. B. B. 2003. 'Iron technology and deforestation: myths and realities'. In *International Conference on Forest and Environmental History of the British Empire and*

- Commonwealth, Centre for World Environmental History, University of Sussex.
- McIntosh, R. J. 1989. 'Middle Niger terracottas before the Symplegades Gates'. *African Arts* 22: 73–83, 103–4.
- Morrison, K. D. 2002. 'Pepper in the hills: upland-lowland exchange and the intensification of the spice trade'. In *Forager-Traders in South and Southeast Asia*, edited by K. Morrison and L. Junker, 105–28. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Muriuki, G. 1974. *A History of the Kikuyu, 1500–1900*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- Nangendo, S. M. 1994. 'Daughters of the clay, women of the farm: women, agricultural economic development and ceramic production in Bungoma District, Western Province, Kenya'. PhD diss., Bryn Mawr College.
- Prins, A. H. J. [1967, Rev. Ed.] 1961. *The Swahili-Speaking Peoples of the East African Coast*. London: International African Institute.
- Robertshaw, P. T. and Collett, D. 1983. 'The identification of pastoral peoples in the archaeological record: an example from East Africa'. *World Archaeology* 15: 67–78.
- Roscoe, P. 2002. 'The hunters and gatherers of New Guinea'. *Current Anthropology* 43 (1): 153–62.
- Sadr, K. 2003. 'The Neolithic of southern Africa'. *Journal of African History* 44 (2): 195–209.
- Schmidt, P. R. 1997. *Iron Technology in East Africa: Symbolism, Science, and Archaeology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Schrire, C. 1992. 'The archaeological identity of hunters and herders at the Cape over the last 2000 years: a critique'. *The South African Archaeological Bulletin* 47 (155): 62–4.
- Schrire, C. and Deacon, J. 1989. 'The indigenous artefacts from Oudepost I, a colonial outpost of the VOC at Saldanha Bay, Cape'. *The South African Archaeological Bulletin*: 105–13.
- Smee, T. and Hardy, H. 1811. 'Report of a voyage to the eastern coast of Africa from Bombay, 1810–1811, in the Honourable Company Cruiser *Ternate* and Frigate *Sylph*, Cpt. Thomas Smee and Lt. Hardy commanding'. *Presidency of Bombay Proceedings* [I.O. L/MAR/C/586.].
- Soper, R. 1965. 'Notes on a visit to the Taita Hills'. Unpublished manuscript. British Institute in Eastern Africa, Nairobi, Kenya.
- Soper, R. 1976. 'Archaeological sites in the Chyulu Hills, Kenya'. *Azania* 11: 83–116.
- Sutton, J. E. G. 1998. 'Engaruka: an irrigation agricultural community in northern Tanzania before the Maasai'. In *Archaeological Sites of East Africa: Four Studies*, edited by J. E. G. Sutton. *Azania* 33: 1–37.
- Terrell, J. E., Hart, J. P., Barut, S., Cellinese, N., Curet, A., Denham, T., *et al.* 2003. 'Domesticated landscapes: the subsistence ecology of plant and animal domestication'.

Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory 10 (4): 323–68.

Thorbahn, P. F. 1979. 'The precolonial ivory trade of East Africa: reconstruction of a human–elephant ecosystem'. PhD diss., University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Wakefield, T. 1870. 'Routes of native caravans from the coast to the interior of East Africa'. *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* 40: 303–38.

38

GLOBAL COMMERCE, SOUTH ASIA AND THE SWAHILI WORLD

Rahul Oka

Introduction

High volume, direct and sustained intercontinental trade between Asia, Africa and Europe first emerged in the Early Common Era, *c.* 200 bce–400 CE. It is in this period that we encounter Greek merchants travelling to eastern African coastal entrepôts of Menouthias, Azania and the ‘trading emporium’ of Rhapta, and Chinese travellers writing about Africans in South Asia (Casson 1989; Chittick 1980). Over the next 17 centuries, the port-cities of the coast emerged as important destinations for traders from South Asia and the Middle East/North Africa, where risk-taking entrepreneurs even in the seventh century CE ‘could realize profits of more than 700%’ on long-distance trading ventures (Dhavalikar 1996: 96; see Chami 1999; Kusimba 1999; Horton and Middleton 2000).

The role of South Asia in this interaction is often minimised, with South Asians seen as occasional traders. The general narrative is that the primary source of religious, cultural and economic influences on eastern Africa prior to 1500 CE was the Middle East and North Africa (Chittick 1965; Trimmingham 1980; Abu-Lughod 1991; but see Horton 1996; Hawkes and Wynne-Jones 2015). After 1500, this attention shifts to Omanis and Europeans as primary external influences (Strandes [1899] 1968; Kusimba 1999). I argue that South Asia was not peripheral; rather, that South Asian traders played crucial roles in both the making and (especially, inadvertently) the unmaking/decline of the Swahili port-cities. I add a caveat that the larger bidirectional exchange of ideas, goods and people between South Asia and eastern Africa that developed over the past 2,000 years was built upon sustained commercial interactions between traders and elites in these regions (Horton 2004).

Indian Ocean trade and South Asian traders

There was a vast trade deficit between Asia and Europe, favouring Asia, that lasted until 1850, lamented by Pliny the Elder in 77 CE (Hudson 1931: 34). Gold, silver, horses, ivory and wine, as well as slaves, poured into South Asian markets. In return, South Asian manufacturers exported value-added commodities, for example, cloth, spices and crafts in bulk (Morrison 1995; Ray 2003). The bulk of eastern African commodities ended up in South and East Asian craft-production centres through the aegis of South Asian traders, suggesting a significant role as oligopsonists in the development of the Swahili world, especially from the eighth century onwards. I examine the changing role of such traders in four ages: the Age of Trade (200 bce–500 CE), the Age of Commerce (500–1000), the Age of Competing Partnership (1000–1500), and the Age of Finance and Extraction (1500–1800) (Figure 38.1).

p.420

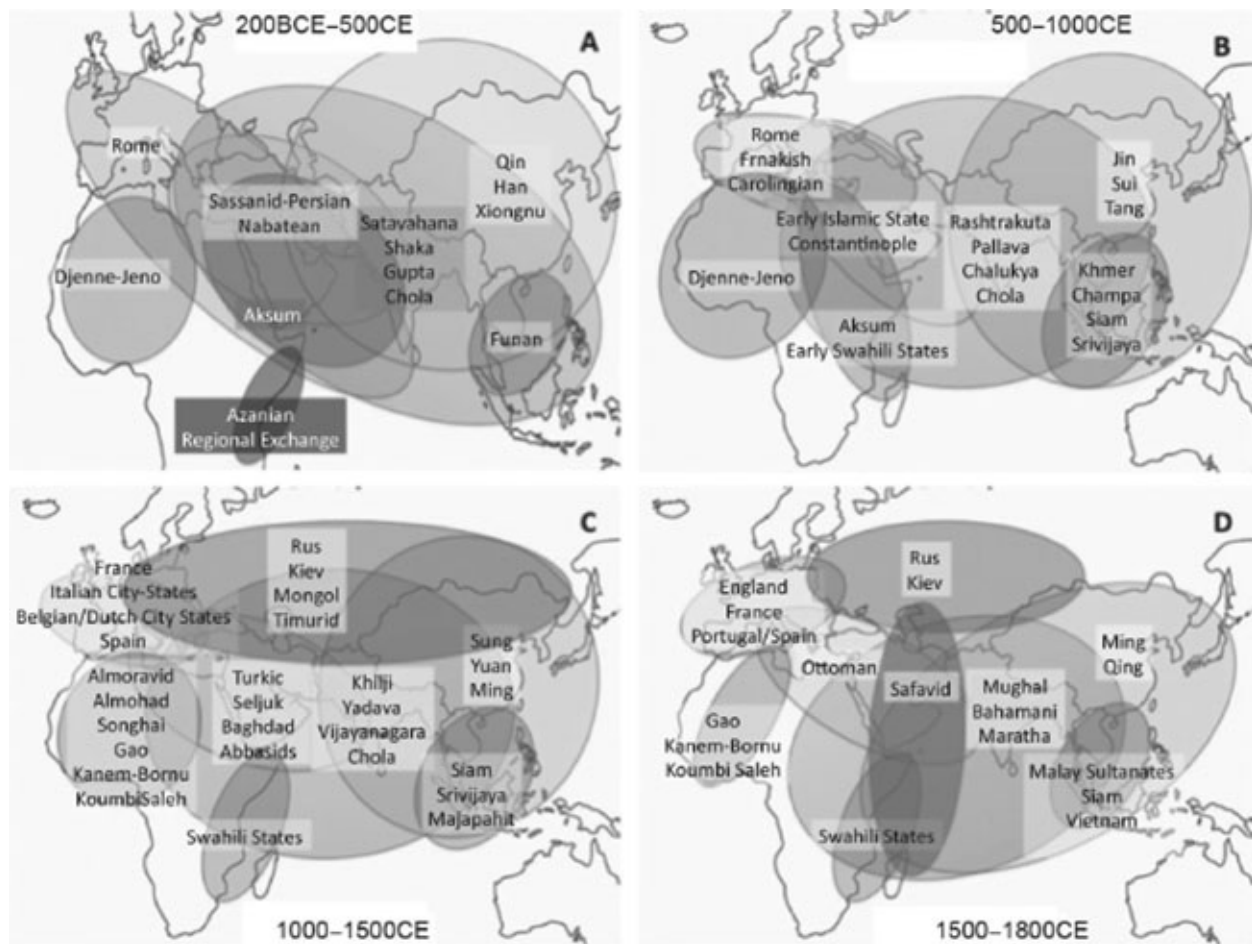


Figure 38.1 Maps showing trading complexes 300 bce–1800 CE

Making of the Swahili world

The Age of Trade (200 BCE–500 CE)

In the Early Common Era there was greater stability of commerce under various trade-friendly polities and empires around the Indian Ocean, which continued into the fourth–sixth centuries CE (Champakalakshmi 1999; Ray 2003). Numerous regional networks merged, resulting in established markets and consumers with global tastes and preferences: for example, a common taste for South Asian cloth, East Asian silk, Mediterranean wine and African ivory, with significant innovations in banking and credit transfers/capitalisation (Morrison 1995; Ray 2003; Oka 2017) (Figure 38.1A).

Apart from textual references in Greek and Chinese sources (Chittick 1980; Casson 1989), there is some evidence of direct South Asian contact with the eastern African coast: Roman trade beads in the Rufiji Delta (see Wood, this volume) and depictions of Africans in Hindu and Buddhist cave-temple sculpture and murals (Dhavalikar 1996; Casson 1989). South Asian traders could have joined Middle Eastern, Mediterranean and Aksumite traders who extended their ventures south of the Horn of Africa between the first century bce and sixth century CE, bringing South Asian cloth, metalwork, beads and other exotic commodities to exchange for African commodities such as ivory, iron, gold, animal skins, rhinoceros horn, semi-precious stones, rock crystals, gum Arabic, beeswax and timber (Kusimba 1999; Manzo 2005). The archaeological evidence for sustained trade between South Asia and eastern Africa is rather sparse in the Age of Trade, as is the overall signature of foreign presence, but with enough non-archaeological data to suggest an ongoing and sustained, small-volume trade in precious goods. However, South Asian traders' impact on Africa changed the Age of Commerce, especially in the second half of the first millennium CE.

p.421

The Age of Commerce (500–1000 CE)

Most of the early first-millennium CE empires had collapsed between the fifth and seventh centuries, to be replaced by smaller and unstable polities. The first half of the Age of Commerce was thus a volatile political landscape, where traders and merchants turned to their own networks and formed institutions such as guilds and cartels/consortia, organised along both ethnic and functional lines, to maintain and protect their local, regional and global trading enterprises (Jain 1990; Landa 1994; Ray 2004; Oka 2008). However, by the end of the eighth century CE, numerous stable and trade-friendly polities arose across the world concurrently with the rise of Islam. Islam played a pivotal role in extending and enhancing this trade across the world (Figure 38.1B). Although Islam spread through conquest that arose in the seventh and eighth centuries, it spread mainly through trade alliances with traders and political elites, embracing Islam across coastal Asia and eastern Africa, similar to the spread of Buddhism in the Early Common Era (Labib 1969; Serjeant 1990; Morrison 1995; Ray 2003).

The centrality of Mecca between the Asian, European and African worlds led to greater: (a) protection of pilgrimage routes and, by default, trade routes by Islamic rulers, and (b) socio-ideological cohesion for traders from West Africa to South-East and East Asia (Pearson 1994). Non-Islamic monarchs and traders prized Islamic traders as economically important clients, and protected them from fraud, assault and theft (Jain 1990; Pearson 1994). More importantly, standardisation of commercial legal systems across the Islamic political world under the nine schools of Islamic law meant that Muslim traders could seek protection and redress across their networks (Udovitch 1970).

Given the growing demand for eastern African products in South Asian crafts-production and agricultural sectors, South Asian traders, Hindu and Muslim, started settling as long-term residents in coastal cities (Chittick 1980; Kusimba *et al.* 1994). They also started importing grain, livestock (*Bos indicus*), cloth, steel and metalwork, exotic ceramics including low-fired glazed wares and high-fired stone wares/porcelains, glassware, perfume, precious oils, date palm sugar, medicines, etc. (Pearson 1998; Kusimba 1999). South Asian traders especially increased their focus on specific eastern African commodities, especially high-quality iron bloom (see LaViolette, this volume).

According to Al Idrisi (c. 1154 CE), South Asian manufacturers saw African iron as superior to Asian or European iron, ideal for steel production (Chittick 1980: 119–20; Kusimba 1996). Iron (and possibly crucible steel) were produced at various sites including Unguja and Galu, with local technology (Mapunda 2002; Kusimba 1996, 1999). The primary export from Africa to South Asia might have actually been iron bloom, as opposed to the usual list of ivory, animal skins/products and gold (Freeman-Grenville 1962). It was paid for with South Asian cloth and other products, and used by South Asian manufacturers in combination with local iron ores to produce wootz steel, a type of crucible steel. It was then exported to the Middle East and other areas as ingots to be forged into the famous Damascus blades (Kusimba 1999). This demand for eastern African iron led to local investment in production of a globally reputed, value-added and locally controlled commodity, further enhancing urban development (see Horton 1996).

p.422

The question is, why did the eastern African metallurgical industry decline after the Age of Commerce, by 1300 CE? This is pertinent given that crucible steel was being produced across Eurasia between the ninth and eleventh centuries, leading to growing demand for high quality iron bloom (Killick 2009). Given their reputed product and control over technology, the eastern African iron industry could have expanded to make crucible steel to compete with other steel-producing regions, including South Asia, at least for regional markets. After all, eastern African crucible steel seems to have been used for utilitarian tools locally, as opposed to its use for high quality weapons in other parts of the world (Kusimba 2009). The answer might lie in the complex dynamics of the comparative advantage of iron and cloth in the Age of Competing Partnerships.

The Age of Competing Partnerships (1000–1500 CE)

By 1000 CE, South Asian traders lived in diasporic communities within Swahili coastal cities, as befitting their wealth and status (Robertshaw 2003; Oka 2008). These groups were patronised by Swahili elites (*waungwana* or *wenyeji asili*), and engaged in multiple friendship and marital alliances with local elites through ritualised exchange of such as glazed/stonewares, perfumes, glasses, sugars and artwork (glass, beads, metal, stone, ivory and wood; Horton 1996; Robertshaw 2003). For example, the famed Shanga lion statuette (Horton 1988) might have been manufactured by South Asian craftsmen to Swahili tastes (Kusimba and Oka 2009; Hawkes and Wynne-Jones 2015). This interaction was enhanced by the South Asian production boom and growing demand for raw materials. This might have led to competitive specialisation affecting desired commodities whose production and distribution could be controlled, imitated and/or dominated through differential advantages in labour, technology and capital (Kulkarni *et al.* 1996; Champakalakshmi 1999).

For South Asian merchants, this commodity was cloth, made in the famed industries of Bengal, Benares, Gujarat, Sindh and the west coast of India (Jain 1990; Ray 2004). However, by the eleventh–twelfth centuries CE, some Swahili sites were emerging as regional centres of cloth production, namely Kilwa, Zeila, Kisimayo and Shanga (Horton 1996; Fleisher 2014). The cloth industry served as both a key revenue source for the towns and as material ways to mediate status through ritualised exchange and display for Swahili elites. Coastal cloth was produced in two ways:

- (1) Local cotton was grown, spun into threads and woven into fabrics to local tastes and preferences. This was not particularly widespread, as the coast lacks the vast black alluvial floodplains ideal for large-scale cotton cultivation.
- (2) Coloured cloths (multi-coloured designed and solid coloured pieces, of silk and cotton) were imported from South Asia, and were then separated into individual threads and rewoven into cloth for local tastes and preferences (Oka 2008).

By 1200 CE, the Swahili cities had developed a complex nexus of value-added production (cloth and iron bloom) and extractive acquisition (ivory, animal products, rock crystal, gold) to become full partners in Indian Ocean trade, unaffected by threats of market capture. South Asian cloth did not satisfy local tastes and preferences until it was rewoven locally. However, in this period, South Asian and other foreign traders had no incentive, nor the ability, to destroy the coastal cloth system, especially since cloth was purchased from South Asia. However, newly formed South Asian merchant leagues, guilds and cartels led to changing attitudes towards export-oriented production across the world, and especially in South Asia (Ray 2003). One of these changes might have had a significant impact on eastern Africa: the South Asian imitative production and export of ‘Monochrome Glazed Wares’ (MGW, also ‘Islamic Glazed Wares’); soft-fabric, low-fired

glazed ceramics made in the Middle East and North Africa, used as vessels for oils, date sugar, honey and as prestige display items.

p.423

The Lashkarshah site at Cambay/Khambat revealed MGW production areas (Bhan 2006; Gaur *et al.* 2008). Middle Eastern/North African MGW have cream/buff fabric and thick glazes ($\geq 1\text{mm}$). The Khambat MGW sherds are characterised by a reddish fabric and thinner glaze than Middle Eastern or North African sherds (0.2–0.6 mm; Oka and Kusimba 2009). Provenience analysis conducted on MGW sherds from the Middle East, North Africa, Lashkarshah in India and Mtwapa in Kenya suggests that 98 per cent ($n = 41$) of the sampled sherds ($n = 42$) excavated from all major stratigraphic units at Mtwapa (eleventh–eighteenth centuries) were made in Lashkarshah, not (as usually assumed) in the Middle East or North Africa (Oka and Kusimba 2009; Kusimba *et al.* forthcoming). Furthermore, South Asian MGW were made using local glass-bead technology as opposed to Middle Eastern or North African glazed ware technology (Dussubieux *et al.* 2008; Kusimba *et al.* 2018).

Initially it was thought that imitation MGW were used to gain access to ivory at the expense of Middle Eastern traders. However, in light of the cloth and iron dynamics, another explanation might be proffered. The South Asian cloth industry, despite or probably because of its cheapness, was unable or unwilling to displace/replace the Swahili rewoven cloth industry. Since South Asian cloth could not directly satisfy the tastes and preferences of African consumers unless it was woven to Swahili tastes, South Asian merchants might have been forced to seek another cheap, locally produced commodity, such as MGW, that did not threaten Swahili industries, but which could be used to maintain a supply of iron bloom. This would have also enabled South Asian traders to ensure the Swahili disinvestment in any steel production, which would have cut into iron production and competed with South Asian steel.

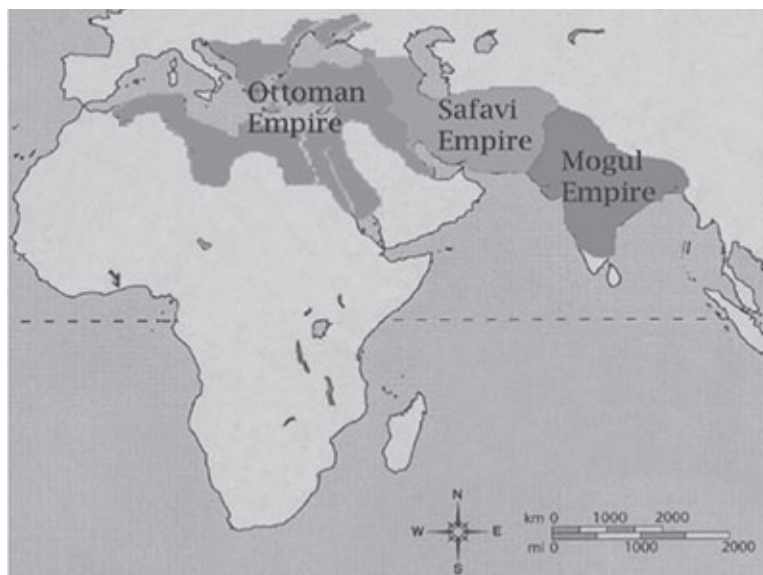
Even as the eastern African iron industry declined, presumably due to competition from production sites that had sprung up across the Old World, the cloth industry and ivory, gold, rock crystal and other trade might have provided both social and economic incentives for Swahili elites to disinvest in export-oriented iron manufacturing (Kusimba 2009). The emphasis on rewoven cloth production and raw materials might even have been seminal in the rise of the coastal cities, and indeed of Swahili culture between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Ironically, if these emphases came at the expense of value-added production of high-quality iron, the Swahili would have become increasingly vulnerable to broader systemic changes in global political and commercial economies after 1500, when the relationship between South Asian traders and Swahili elites transformed from one of competing partners enjoying their comparative advantages, to a more unequal system in the Age of Finance and Extraction.

Unmaking/decline of the Swahili world

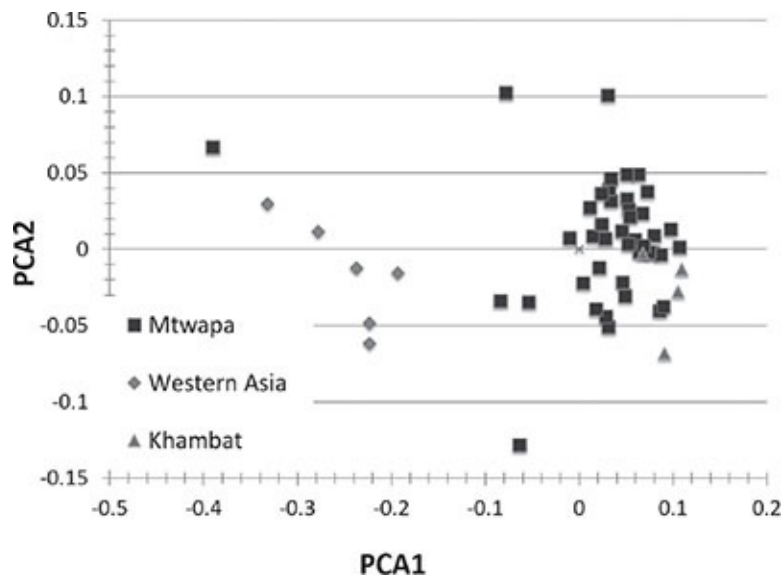
The Age of Finance and Extraction (1500–1800 CE)

While the sixteenth century is usually seen as the period of European incursions into the Indian Ocean world, the actual European economic impact on the global political and commercial economy of South Asia was minimal (Pearson 1998; Alam and Subrahmanyam 1998). The primary game-changer was the Islamic Détente: emerging stability amidst the rise of the Mughal, Safavid and Ottoman Empires, ruled by three families over 200 years, that established political and economic parity between the empires while diminishing large-scale warfare (mostly) in favour of diplomacy (Oka 2008; Oka *et al.* 2009) (see Figures 38.1D, 38.2a).

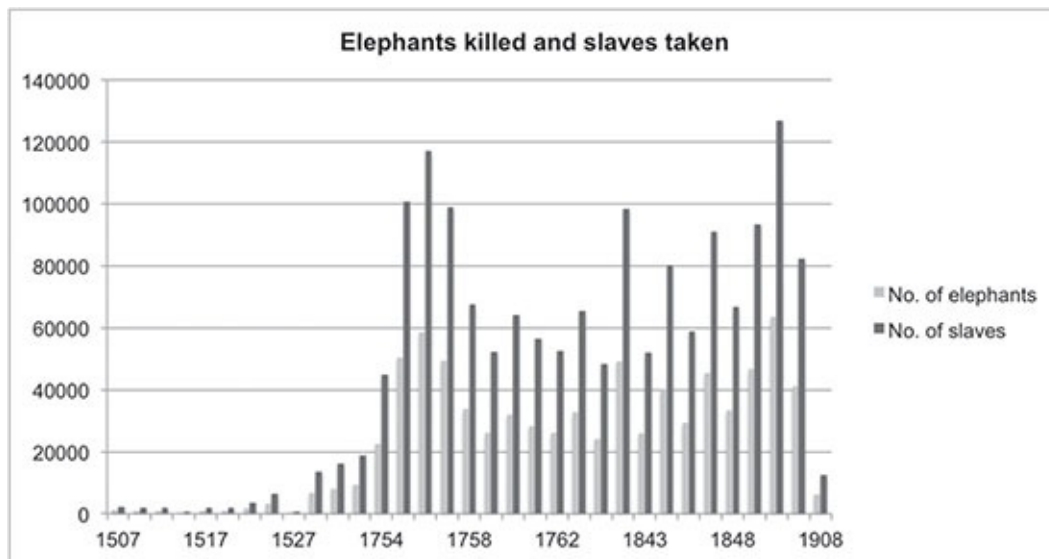
p.424



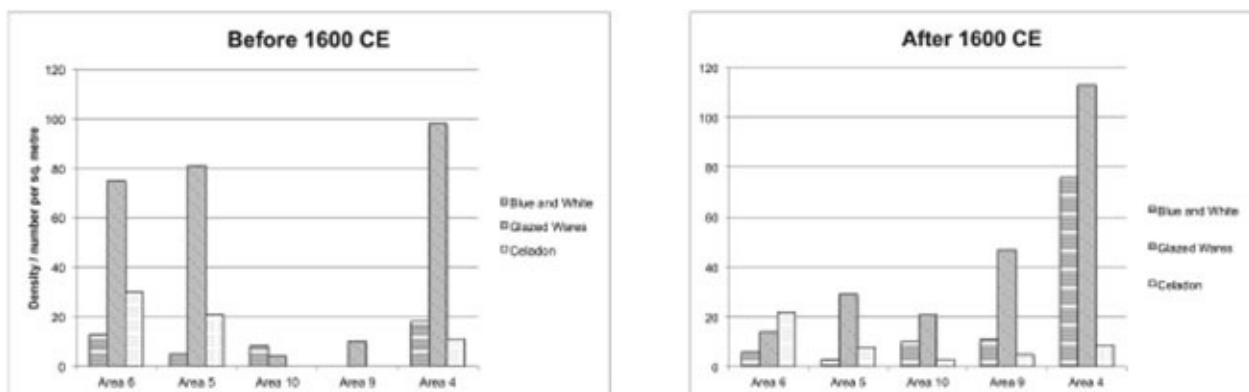
[*Figure 38.2a*](#) Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal Empires and the Imperial Détente



[Figure 38.2b](#) Provenience analysis of glazed wares in Mtwapa



[Figure 38.2c](#) Estimates of elephants killed and humans trafficked 1500–1900 CE



[Figure 38.2d](#) Changes in production and elite households in Mtwapa, before (left) and after

There were immediate impacts of this tri-modal division of political and economic power, a *détente* that lasted almost two centuries. First, there emerged an unprecedented stability in terms of imperial reigns, increasing from *c.* 10–12 years (300 bce–1400 CE) to an average of 23.1 between 1400 and 1700 CE (Oka *et al.* 2018). Second, there was a growth of state mercantilism and trade-friendliness in the three empires by 1600 (Islam 1970; Alam and Subramanyam 1998; Barzegar 2000; Jabbari 2004). Mughal elites, in particular, sought increasing revenues from the growth of trade, commerce and entrepreneurial production. Third, in the late seventeenth century, global commercial revenues approached and even surpassed agricultural revenues as proportions of total state revenue (Moosvi 1987; Prakash 1994). In this global commerce, where supply-chain maintenance became crucial, traders emerged as primary brokers between maritime commerce and global markets, and the production centres in imperial hinterlands (Farooqi 1989).

In South Asia this culminated in the rise of influential merchant princes and Great Firms, who became both bankers/creditors and fiscal policy-makers to empires, reversing the previous dependence of traders on the state; this led to greater moral hazard on the part of traders (Alam and Subramayam 1998; Leonard 1998). Traders were able to engage in market capture with impunity, through dumping of cheap finished goods to replace locally manufactured goods and a coercive investment in raw-material-based extractive economies in peripheral areas (Leonard 1998; Clarence-Smith 2006). This led to great disadvantage for crafts producers and elites in peripheral areas such as eastern Africa and Southeast Asia between 1600 and 1700 CE, as their production units could not compete in volume or price with the large proto-industries of Asia. Evidence from various coastal sites suggests that the rewoven cloth industry started to decline in the late seventeenth century CE, judging from decreasing frequency of loom weights in the upper sediments of coastal sites (Kusimba 1996; Oka 2008; Prestholdt 2008).

The question is: why did the Swahili cloth industry decline when it had managed to survive and thrive in the face of direct South Asian competition between 1000 and 1650 CE? As above, Swahili cloth production competed successfully with South Asian cloth throughout the thirteenth–sixteenth centuries because the Swahili enjoyed two advantages, namely knowledge of (1) local and regional tastes and preferences, and (2) trade routes into hinterland ivory and iron production sites. In these periods, even though South Asian traders would have preferred to sell cloth to Africa for immediate use, they might also have been happy to sell imitative MGW to maintain some advantage (Kusimba *et al.* 2018). In the sixteenth century, this cloth industry grew to large proportions, where cloth was often stockpiled, presumably to control for inflation and possibly to prevent South Asians from flooding the markets with their cloth (Prestholdt 1998) (Figure 38.2b).

However, the aforementioned changes in South Asian cloth manufacture, through innovation and capitalisation in the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries, led to an unprecedented boom in production efficiency, problematic even for Chinese cloth makers (Chung 1987; Das Gupta and Pearson 1987; Pearson 1998). South Asian manufacturers altered their production strategies for eastern African tastes and secured legitimacy from local elites to dump cloth into coastal markets. Subsequently, Swahili voyages to Gujarat ports declined between 1650 and 1750 (Machado 2011). The death knell for the northern Swahili cloth industry might have come in 1698. Then, the Omani rulers of Zanzibar granted a oligopoly (a market shared by a small number of sellers) to the Gujrati merchant cartel from Daman and Diu to sell cloth on the coast (Newitt 1987; Machado 2011).

p.426

The question then is: why did South Asian merchants alter their strategies *vis-à-vis* cloth production, and out-compete coastal cloth industry, when they had not done so before? The primary reasons were the increase in predatory business practices and demand for ivory in the South Asia–East Asia trade. African ivory was used by both South Asians and their European partners to offset the Chinese demand for silver bullion as the only acceptable mode of payment. As shown in Figure 38.2c, South Asians started investing heavily in raw ivory, in exchange for cheaply produced and transported cloth, grains, South Asian MGW and cattle (Newitt 1987; Clarence-Smith 2006; Machado 2011). However, this ivory purchased for cloth worth ‘x’ units in eastern Africa was imported into South Asia, re-evaluated to a fraction of the price ($1/3 - 1/6$) and re-exported to China (Oka *et al.* forthcoming a). While seemingly counter-intuitive, South Asians were buying ivory for very cheap, mass-produced cloth (including transportation costs) with no local competition, repricing ivory based on the costs of cloth exchange in South Asia, and re-exporting it to China as a cheap substitute for silver bullion (Oka 2008; Oka *et al.* 2009).

The Omani conquest in the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries also led to increased migration of South Asian merchants to the Swahili coast (Newitt 1987). Unlike their predecessors, these diasporan groups included portfolio capitalists, bankers and financiers (Leonard 1998; Oonk 2013). They invested heavily in coastal plantations and in the ivory-slavery raids into the hinterland that extended into the nineteenth century (Tagliacozzo 2002). The growing influence of South Asian merchants focusing heavily on raw materials led to elite disinvestment in local production, under-development in local infrastructure, and intensified competition within and between elites of the Swahili ports, to attract South Asian capital (Oka 2008; Machado 2011; see Figure 38.2d). As smaller ports faced greater challenges in providing such infrastructure due to loss of revenues, merchants left for ports that could, which in turn grew larger. The smaller ports declined in prominence and/or were abandoned by the nineteenth century (Oka 2008; Oka *et al.* 2009). As the urban landscape changed from a more complex graduated settlement system (small villages, large villages, small towns, large towns) to a bifurcated settlement system of small villages

and megaports such as Mombasa, Lamu and Zanzibar, South Asian traders influenced the fiscal system to their benefit and to the overall decline of urbanism on the Swahili coast (Oka 2008; Oka *et al.* 2009).

Conclusion

The emergence of Swahili cities was as much global as it was a regional and local process. Building primarily upon regional exchange networks during the Age of Trade and the mid-first millennium CE, the coastal elite of the eighth–tenth centuries emerged as effective managers of a complex social economy within the Age of Commerce in the Indian Ocean trade. They engaged in production and exchange of both value-added and raw commodities that had global acclaim, especially high quality iron and ivory, and built a cloth production-exchange complex using both local cotton and imported South Asian cloth. For almost 400 years in the Age of Competing Partnerships, the Swahili cloth industry successfully competed with better capitalised South Asian traders (no mean feat given that producers in other areas consistently failed), forcing them to imitate Monochrome Glazed Wares to maintain advantage, and (perhaps) to persuade the Swahili to focus on iron bloom rather than steel production. The decline of the Swahili world from 1600–1700 was similarly global. The concurrent rise of South Asian imitative mass production and market capture, Swahili disinvestment/decline in multiple local industries, and growing investment in raw material extraction of ivory and slaves, and in plantation economies, led to an overall revenue decline for smaller Swahili cities, and the flight of capital, merchants and Swahili elites to larger cities. These changes were important parts of a larger global commerce involving South and East Asia and, subsequently, Europe.

p.427

The South Asian role in the Swahili world is complex, with trade being but one of the many interactions. South Asian music styles influenced the Swahili *taarabu* music forms, and cuisine and culinary style had a definite impact on Swahili cuisine, perhaps far greater than that of the Middle East or Persia. The South Asian role in Swahili political economy is another matter, affecting both its rise and decline. Although the decline reads as a classic narrative of extraction, caution must be advised in assigning blame. South Asian traders were responding to unprecedented stability, trade-friendliness and increased capital, and indulged in behaviours that had an unintended but tragic impact on eastern Africa. On a larger scale, this process was reproduced in post-1600 incursions of external powers across sub-Saharan Africa, where African societies would be viewed as sources for raw material extraction and consumers of cheap finished goods. Now we are in the third Scramble for Africa initiated by the Chinese and the Indians (the first in 1884 at the Berlin Conference, the second during the Cold War). It can also be said that this is just the latest iteration of the one and only Scramble for Africa, a process in which South Asians played a

central role on the Swahili coast starting in 1500.

References

- Abu-Lughod, J. L. 1991. *Before European Hegemony: The World System ad 1250–1350*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Alam, M. and Subrahmanyam, S. 1998. 'Introduction'. In *The Mughal State, 1526–1750*, edited by M. Alam and S. Subrahmanyam, 1–74. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Barzegar, K. N. 2000. *Mughal–Iranian Relations during Sixteenth Century*. Delhi: Indian Bibliographies Bureau.
- Bhan, K. K. 2006. 'Towards the understanding of medieval glazed pottery manufacture from Lashkarshah, Khambhat, Gujarat'. *Man and Environment* 31 (2): 90–5.
- Casson, L. 1989. *The Periplus Maris Erythraei: Text with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Chami, F. A. 1999. 'Roman beads from the Rufiji Delta, Tanzania: first incontrovertible archaeological link with the *Periplus*'. *Current Anthropology* 40 (2): 237–42.
- Champakalakshmi, R. 1999. *Trade, Ideology and Urbanization: South India 300 bc to ad 1300*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Chittick, H. N. 1980. 'Indian relations with East Africa before the arrival of the Portuguese'. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 2: 117–27.
- Chittick, N. 1965. 'The "Shirazi" colonization of East Africa'. *Journal of African History* 6 (3): 275–94.
- Chung, T. 1987. 'The Britain–India–China trade triangle 1771–1840'. In *Essays in Modern Indian History*, edited by S. Bhattacharya, 115–32. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers.
- Clarence-Smith, W. G. 2006. 'Cotton textiles on the Indian Ocean periphery, c. 1500–c. 1850'. Electronic document, available online at: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/economicHistory/seminars/Clarence-Smith-Textiles4.pdf>.
- Das Gupta, A. and Pearson, M. N. 1987. *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500–1800*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Dhavalikar, M. K. 1996. 'Environment: its influence on history and culture in western India'. *Indica* 33 (2): 81–118.
- Dussubieux, L., Kusimba, C. M., Gogte, V., Kusimba, S. B., Gratuze, B. and Oka, R. 2008. 'The trading of ancient glass beads: new analytical data from South Asian and East African soda–alumina glass beads'. *Archaeometry* 50 (5): 797–821.
- Farooqi, N. M. 1989. *Mughal–Ottoman Relations: A Study of Political and Diplomatic Relations between Mughal India and the Ottoman Empire, 1556–1748*. Delhi: Idarah-I-Adabiyat.

Fleisher, J. B. 2014. 'The complexity of public space at the Swahili town of Songo Mnara, Tanzania'. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 35: 1–22.

p.428

- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1962. *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the First to the Earlier Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Gaur, A. S., Khedekar, V. and Rao, B. R. 2008. 'Elemental oxides analysis of the medieval period glazed ware from Gogha, Gulf of Khambhat, Gujarat, India'. *Current Science* 95: 670–4.
- Hawkes, J. D. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2015. 'India in Africa: trade goods and connections of the late first millennium'. *Afriques: Débats, Méthodes et Terrains d'Histoire* (06). Available online at: <http://afriques.revues.org/1752>.
- Horton, M. 1988. 'Indian metalwork in East Africa: the bronze lion statuette from Shanga'. *Antiquity* 62 (234): 11–23.
- Horton, M. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. 2004. 'Craftspeople, communities, and commodities: medieval exchanges between north western India and East Africa'. *Ars Orientalis* 34: 62–80.
- Horton, M. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. London: Blackwell.
- Hudson, G. F. 1931. *Europe and China: A Survey of Their Relations from the Earliest Times to 1800*. London: E. Arnold and Sons.
- Islam, R. 1970. *Indo-Persian Relations: A Study of the Political and Diplomatic Relations between the Mughul Empire and Iran*. Teheran: Iranian Cultural Foundation.
- Jabbari, H. 2004. *Trade and Commerce Between Iran and India During the Safavid Period (1555–1707)*. New Delhi: Indian Bibliographies Bureau.
- Jain, V. K. 1990. *Trade and Traders in Western India*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal.
- Killick, D. 2009. 'Agency, dependency, and long-distance trade: East Africa and the Islamic World, ca. 700–1500 CE'. In *Politics and Power: Archaeological Perspectives on the Landscapes of Early States*, edited by S. E. Falconer and C. L. Redman, 179–207. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Kulkarni, A. R., Nayeem, M. A. and de Souza, T. R. (Eds) 1996. *Medieval Deccan History: Commemoration Volume in Honour of Purushottam Mahadeo Joshi*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1996. 'The social context of iron forging on the Kenya coast'. *Africa* 66 (3): 386–410.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1999. *The Rise and Fall of Swahili States*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira.
- Kusimba, C. M. 2009. 'Landscape at two scales: economy and trade in East Africa'. In *Politics and Power: Archaeological Perspectives on the Landscapes of Early States*, edited by S. E.

- Falconer and C. L. Redman, 179–201. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Kusimba, C. M. and Oka, R. 2009. 'Trade and polity in East Africa: re-examining elite strategies for acquiring power'. In *The Changing Worlds of Atlantic Africa*, edited by T. Falola and M. D. Childs, 67–88. Durham: Carolina Academic Press.
- Kusimba, C. M., Killick, D. J. and Cresswell, R. G. 1994. 'Indigenous and imported metals at Swahili sites on the coast of Kenya'. *Society, Culture, and Technology in Africa* 11: 63–77.
- Kusimba, C. M., Oka, R. C., Gogte, V. D., Dussubieux, L. and Bhan, K. K. 2018. 'East Africans' connections with South Asians'. In *Maritime Networks and Urbanism in the Early Medieval World*, edited by M. Childs. Cambridge University Press.
- Labib, S. Y. 1969. 'Capitalism in medieval Islam'. *Journal of Economic History* 29 (1): 79–96.
- Landa, J. T. 1994. *Trust, Ethnicity, and Identity: Beyond the New Institutional Economics of Ethnic Trading Networks, Contract Law, and Gift Exchange*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Leonard, K. 1998. 'The "Great Firm" theory of the decline of the Mughal Empire'. In *The Mughal State, 1526–1750*, edited by M. Alam and S. Subrahmanyam, 398–419. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Machado, P. 2011. 'Awash in a sea of cloth'. In *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200–1850*, edited by P. Riello and P. Parthasarathi, 161–79. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Manzo, A. 2005. *Aksumite Trade and the Red Sea Exchange Network: A View from Bieta Giyorgis (Aksum)*. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Mapunda, B. 2002. 'Iron metallurgy along the Tanzanian coast'. In *Southern Africa and the Swahili World*, edited by F. Chami and G. Pwiti, 76–88. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press.
- Moosvi, S. 1987. *The Economy of the Mughal Empire, c. 1595: A Statistical Study*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Morrison, K. D. 1995. 'Trade, urbanism, and agricultural expansion: Buddhist monastic institutions and the state in the Early Historic western Deccan'. *World Archaeology* 27 (2): 203–21.
- Newitt, M. D. D. 1987. 'East Africa and the Indian Ocean trade'. In *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500–1800*, edited by A. Das Gupta and M. N. Pearson, 201–23. Calcutta: Oxford University Press.

- Oka, R. C. 2008. 'Resilience and adaptation of trade networks in East African and South Asian port polities, 1500–1800 ce'. PhD diss., University of Illinois, Chicago.
- Oka, R. C. 2017. 'Trade, traders, and trading systems: exchange, trade, commerce and the rise/demise of civilizations'. In *Trade and Civilization*, edited by K. Kristiansen.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Oka, R. C. and Kusimba, C. M. 2009. 'Producing and exporting "South Asian" Islamic monochrome glazed wares: import substitution and market capture in the 16th and 17th centuries CE?' Presented at 108th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Philadelphia, PA, 2–6 December.
- Oka, R., Kusimba, C. M. and Gogte, V. D. 2009. 'Where others fear to trade'. In *The Political Economy of Hazards and Disasters*, edited by A. Murphy and E. Jones, 201–32. Walnut Creek: AltaMira.
- Oka, R. C., Kusimba, C. M. and Enverova, D. 2018. 'Changing commerce and merchant power in the Indian Ocean: impacts on Afro-Asian core and peripheral polities, ca. 300 bce–1800 CE'. In *Economic and Political Interaction on the Edges of the Ancient Empires*, edited by D. A. Warburton. Berlin: TOPOI.
- Oka, R. C., Kusimba, C. M. and Thorbahn, P. F. forthcoming a. 'East African ivory and the Indian Ocean trade complex'. In *Ecology, Economy and Culture*, edited by C. M. Kusimba, S. B. Kusimba and R. C. Oka, 300–44. Chicago: Fieldiana Press.
- Oonk, G. 2013. *Settled Strangers: Asian Business Elites in East Africa 1800–2000*. New Delhi: Sage Publishers.
- Pearson, M. N. 1994. *Pious Passengers: The Hajj in Earlier Times*. Delhi: Sterling Publishers.
- Pearson, M. N. 1998. *Port Cities and Intruders: The Swahili Coast, India, and Portugal in the Early Modern Era*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Prakash, O. (Ed.) 1994. *Precious Metals and Commerce: The Dutch East India Company in the Indian Ocean Trade*. Hampshire: Variorum.
- Prestholdt, J. G. 1998. *As Artistry Permits and Custom May Ordain: The Social Fabric of Material Consumption in the Swahili World, circa 1450–1600*. Working Papers of the Program of African Studies, Northwestern University, Volume 3.
- Ray, H. P. 2003. *The Archaeology of Seafaring in Ancient South Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ray, H. P. 2004. 'The beginnings: the artisan and the merchant in early Gujarat, sixth–eleventh centuries'. *Ars Orientalis* 34: 39–61.
- Robertshaw, P. 2003. 'The origins of the state in East Africa'. In *East African Archaeology: Foragers, Potters, Smiths, and Traders*, edited by C. Kusimba and S. Kusimba, 149–66. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Serjeant, R. B. 1990. 'Meccan trade and the rise of Islam: misconceptions and flawed polemics'. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 110 (3): 472–86.
- Strandes, J. 1968 [1899]. *The Portuguese Period in East Africa*, Trans. J. F. Wallwork, Ed. J. S. Kirkman. Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau.
- Tagliacozzo, E. 2002. 'Trade, production, and incorporation: the Indian Ocean in flux, 1600–1900'. *Itinerario* 26 (1): 75–106.
- Trimingham, J. S. 1980. *The Influence of Islam upon Africa*. London: Longman.

Udovitch, A. L. 1970. *Partnership and Profit in Medieval Islam*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

39

LINKS WITH CHINA

Bing Zhao and Dashu Qin

Early Chinese contact with eastern Africa

In 166 CE, a diplomatic mission sent by Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (r. 161–180 CE) sailed to the Vietnamese peninsula, and then travelled overland to Luoyang (Henan Province), capital of the Chinese Han Dynasty. Among the gifts brought by the mission were rhinoceros horns, elephant tusks and hawksbill turtles (*The History of the Later Han Dynasty*, Zhonghua shuju, 1965 Ed.: 2920). Scholars believe today that these goods were collected from the northern part of eastern Africa (northern coasts and nearby regions of today's Somalia and northern Kenya). Furthermore, a diplomatic mission from the ports of Moka and Adulis reached China early in the year 101 CE (*The History of the Later Han Dynasty*, Zhonghua shuju, 1965 Ed.: 198). Situated on the western shore of the Red Sea within the territory of modern Eritrea, the port of Adulis was the largest entrepôt for ivory, jewels, incense, metals and grain in the Red and Arabian Sea regions. Adulis was at that time an active hub for trade networks connecting the Roman Empire and the East. It was from this port that African goods were traded to the Persian Gulf or India and transported to China both by sea and overland.

Early Chinese texts and archaeology provide insights into the early consumption of eastern African products in China. For example, in the years 110–105 bce, in the palace capital of the Western Han Dynasty (Xi'an, Shaanxi Province), it was most fashionable to use incense from Arabia and eastern Africa ([Figure 39.1](#)). The kingdom of Nanyue, with its capital near the modern city of Guangzhou (Guangdong Province) in the south, was described by Sima Qian (145–86 bce), as a collection centre for rhinoceros horn, elephant tusks, tortoise shell, pearls, exotic fruits and cloth. Numbers of precious items from South Asia, Western Asia and Africa buried with Emperor Wen (r. 137–122 bce), the second ruler of the Kingdom of Nanyue, suggest the scale and variety of the earliest Indian Ocean maritime trade. Among these artefacts, five delicate tusks of male African elephants have been found, the longest measuring 126 cm (Guangzhou shi wenhuaju, 2008, Vol. 3: 96,

Figure 100). Nevertheless, the initial trade between China and the West appeared to be driven by the Roman Empire's need for Chinese silks. Western Asian and African products were traded in limited quantity to China as a way to balance the deficit of exchanges.

p.431



[Figure 39.1](#) Chinese southern maritime façade with main ports and kiln sites in relation to eastern Africa (© B. Zhao)

By the time of the Jin Dynasty (265–420 CE), China had reached a considerable level in seafaring technology, skills and experience, and was developing its overseas contacts; it

was thus familiar with nearby maritime areas. Sasanian Persia (226–651 CE) promoted trade in the Indian Ocean and with China, while merchants from different regions and trading groups worked on gathering seagoing information relevant to further east. Southeast Asia is the maritime route connecting China, South Asia, western Asia and Africa, the bridge connecting the Indian Ocean to the China seas. Additionally, merchants from Sriwijaya (seventh–tenth CE), a kingdom based on the Malay Peninsula, intensified westward trading activities. Aiming to participate in the maritime Sino-African trade, Austronesians provided various African rarities to China. According to official Chinese historic records, ‘black’ slaves were traded to China both by land and sea from the early eighth century CE onwards, mainly by Sriwijaya merchants; they might well have come from both Southeast Asia and eastern Africa.

After the mid-seventh century CE, Muslim merchants based in Siraf on the Persian Gulf began to sail directly to China’s ports. In the eighth and ninth centuries CE, Muslim trading communities settled in China: on Hainan Island and in the Guangzhou (Guangdong Province) and Yangzhou (Jiangsu Province) port sites in particular. Around 780 CE, the Ganzu Corridor of overland trade fell under the control of Tibetan merchants. This marked the end of an era of Chinese dominance in Central Asia. The Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE) court and capital city Chang’an (Xi’an, Shaanxi Province), a cosmopolitan settlement of more than a million inhabitants, turned to southern maritime trade with western Asia and Africa to satisfy the increasing need for luxuries. The Tang Dynasty’s policies on maritime trade coincided with Islamic merchants’ maritime ambitions. The first regular, substantial and enduring maritime connections between China, western Asia and eastern Africa were established by the end of the eighth century or early ninth century CE.

p.432

From the seventh to eleventh century, the Chinese population increased by over 500 per cent. Coupled with migration from the north to the south, coastal southern kingdoms – in particular Nanhan (917–971 CE) and Wuyue (907–978 CE) – actively encouraged seaborne commerce. The first controlled southern seas and Guangzhou port, while the second eastern seas and Ningbo port (Zhejiang Province). Their inhabitants made their livings and grew wealthy by cultivating foodstuffs for export (sugar, wine, salt, wheat flour), manufacturing (ceramic, silk, paper, iron wares) and importing sought-after foreign commodities. From the end of the tenth century CE, the Song Dynasty (960–1279 CE) benefited from the accumulation of nautical technology and seafaring knowledge by the kingdoms of Nanhan and Wuyue, and emerged as the first Asian sea power. As a consequence of the advantages obtained from economies of scale, sizable Chinese junks came to dominate sailing between the China Seas and India, servicing regional and inter-regional exchanges and displacing smaller vessels from the Indian Ocean. With such Chinese maritime supremacy emerged a new Sino-African global sea-trade polity, as merchants from various countries shared a vision to build a global trade network, with a

shortened and lower-cost system of transport. From the eleventh century onwards, then, rather than covering the entire journey between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, merchants began to specialise in one portion of the route, and transferred goods from one sector to others along the route.

In general terms, the Song Dynasty imperative for long-distance seaborne trade was to acquire luxury goods from western Asia and Africa. From the shipwreck cargos of two Arab single-mast dhows, the Intan and Cirebon, eastern African elephant tusks have been identified (Flecker 2002: 94; Li 2007; Lieber 2014: 211–12, figures 2.3–125). African rhino horns have also been found in the Cirebon cargo (Flecker 2002: 94). During the Song Dynasty, the demand for elephant tusks increased dramatically as ivory was widely used by the emperor, princes and mandarins, in particular for carriage manufacture. Eastern African elephant tusks were particularly favoured in China for their white colour and straight shape. From the second century CE onwards, dozens of plants were also traded to China from eastern Africa, including *Commiphora molmol* (myrrh), *Liquidambar orientalis* (oriental sweetgum), *Aloe vulgaris*, *Commiphora pedunculata*, *Balsamodendron africanum*, *Aucklandia costus* (costus), *Dracaena schizantha* (dragon's blood tree), *Ptero carpus* and *Inula helenium* (horse heal). These were mostly used as decorations and incenses; some were used for lighting and medical treatment. Such plant consumption, both as incense and cosmetics, was greatest in the eleventh century and after. In addition, *Boswellia carteri* (frankincense) was made into pills and powders for oral administration or external application. Most *Boswellia carteri* used in the Song Dynasty was from Africa, in particular from the Benadir coast. Early in the sixth century CE, African ambergris was sold to China by Arab merchants, sought after for its long-lasting fragrance. During the Sui Dynasty (581–618 CE) and Tang dynasty, ambergris was called 'marvellous incense' and listed as one of the top foreign rarities. In the late ninth century CE in China ambergris from Arabia and eastern Africa was deemed to be 'real ambergris', while that from the eastern Indian Ocean was considered 'fake ambergris'. After the thirteenth century, ambergris from the Maldives and Nicobar Islands was exported to China in large quantities, although eastern African ambergris remained favoured for its exceptional quality (Shen 2010: 200).

p.433

Luxury goods from eastern Africa such as ivory, rhino horn and incense constitute one important part of the commodities in the official trade between the Song Dynasty, northern nomadic empires, and East Asia (Japan and Korea). Precisely for these reasons, the Song Dynasty not only encouraged foreign trade, but aimed to reinforce its control over it to levy maximum profits. According to the official Chinese view, foreign trade functioned as a tribute payment (*gong*) system, whose main object was to ensure China's suzerainty and centrality in commercial exchanges with 'alien' countries. Theoretically, the imperial court supervised and regulated all transactions with foreign countries, in order to levy taxes and maintain the monopoly of certain commodities for itself. Yet, this tributary trade was in fact a type of privately regulated commerce (*shi*; Wan 2007;

Bielenstein 2005; Gipouloux 2009). Consequently, a series of Maritime Trade Bureaus (*shibosi*) were established from the end of the tenth century CE onwards in the main ports (Guangzhou in 971, Hangzhou in 989, Mingzhou in 999, Quanzhou in 1087, Mizhou in 1088, Xiuzhou in 1113, Jiangping in 1117 and Wenzhou in 1146). They depended in practice upon a group of *yaren*, private merchants, as intermediaries to operate them (Liao 1990). Taxes on imported and exported commodities were classified by the Maritime Trade Bureau into two types: 'fine goods' and 'ordinary goods'. The classification depended on the economic value and market demand of the commodities. African ivory, rhino horn, *Diospyros melanoxylan* (an ebony wood), wild animals, *Aloe vulgaris*, amber and various incense and spices were always classified as 'fine goods' and purchased by the government in large quantities (Duyvendak 1947; Wheatley 1975; Huang 2003). Besides these well-known goods from eastern Africa, iron bloom and iron utensils appear to have been traded to southern coastal regions in China according to the official text related to foreign exchanges and included in *The History of the Song Dynasty* (Zhonghua shuju, 1977 Ed.: 4558).

The countries linked to China through the tributary system were, for the most part, those of East and Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, Chinese official sources record a body of information regarding merchants from the eastern African coast. The *New Book of the Tang Dynasty* noted that in 639 CE, a mission from the country named 'Gantang' arrived in the capital Chang'an (Zhonghua shuju, 1975 Ed.: 6233). Most scholars believe that Gantang refers either to the ancient town also known as Qanbalu on Pemba Island or Pemba itself (LaViolette, this volume), or the settlement of Unguja Ukuu in Zanzibar (Juma, this volume). For instance, *The Song Dynasty Manuscript Compendium* records that in 1101 CE, captains from Somalia, Oman's Suhar and Mogadishu from the Benadir coast, along with envoys from Egypt's Damietta, arrived at Kaifeng. They presented rarities including incense and ivory to the Chinese emperor (Zhonghua shuju 1957 Ed.: 7761). From the second half of the thirteenth century onwards there was a surprising increase in trade missions from eastern Africa. Meanwhile, one can notice that Chinese knowledge of Sino-African maritime itineraries and the Swahili landscape is greatly enriched at this time, due to the subsequent territorial and trade expansion under the Yuan Dynasty. *The Description of the Barbarians of the Isles* () is an account compiled by the 'navigator' Wang Dagan in 1349 CE. In this there are more detailed descriptions of the southern reaches of the Swahili coast – the Kilwa Archipelago – as compared with the Song period writing that focuses on the coasts of Somalia, Kenya and northern Tanzania. However, it is impossible to assess whether these sources are truly first-hand accounts as there has been no comparative study of Chinese and Arab geographies for this period. These descriptions of far-away Swahili lands in Chinese sources may have contributed to the ways the Chinese imagined the world and to their growing maritime framework. Some Chinese and Japanese historians support the hypothesis of a direct and regular shipping route between China and the Swahili world from the twelfth century onward (Terada 1988: 101–102; Shen 2010: 194–196). One document in the Rasulid archive attests to the presence of a Chinese junk in

the port of Aden on 31 January 1423, most probably from the Zheng He expeditions (Terada 1988: 98–99; Qin and Ding, this volume). Yet, the astonishment expressed in this archive obviously suggests the absence of Chinese junks in the previous period (Vallet 2015).

p.434

Chinese ceramics in eastern Africa: the leading indicator of Sino-African trade

As far as Chinese products exported to eastern Africa are concerned, archaeologists have excavated a significant corpus of Chinese ceramic sherds, along with a tiny number of copper coins and two pieces of glassware (Wood, this volume). Early coins from the reign of Kaiyuan (713–741 CE), and the mark of the Tang Dynasty, were found at Mogadishu and on Zanzibar (Murdoch 1959: 205; Terada 1988: 97). Those of the Song and Ming Dynasties have been found in larger quantities at several coastal sites (including Mogadishu, Mambrui, Gede, Mombasa, Zanzibar, Mafia and Kilwa). Being one of the main Chinese goods exported, copper coins were not used solely by overseas Chinese merchants, but they occur in reasonable numbers in Japan and Korea, Southeast Asia and South Asia as one of the regular currencies for regional and global exchange. Thanks to their intrinsic value, Chinese copper coins were also sought after as raw material and capital in various regions of the Indian Ocean (Thierry 1997). Study of their function as secondary currency in Swahili mercantile society has not been undertaken, but their rare occurrence in Swahili archaeological sites should probably not be seen as evidence of Chinese merchants' presence.

The major archaeological evidence of Sino-Swahili exchanges constitutes Chinese ceramic sherds found archaeologically in some quantity due to their durability and visibility. Thanks to a long tradition of study in China and increasing archaeological discoveries in Chinese and in Southeast Asian waters, Chinese ceramic sherds provide the most accurate date range among the finds excavated from port sites in the Indian Ocean. Aside from providing chronological reference, the study of Chinese sherds is pertinent on a number of historical levels. From a local viewpoint, their density at a site may be used as a measurement of the ancient settlement's degree of involvement in long-distance trade. Their occurrence in archaeological sites around the Indian Ocean rim offers precise geographical data for recreating maritime trade trajectories.

The Sasanid expansion during the seventh century CE, both in the Indian Ocean and China Sea, might have brought Chinese ceramics to Unguja Ukuu on Zanzibar (Juma 2004: 107). From the mid-eighth century onwards, Muslim Abbasid caliphs drove demand for Chinese ceramics in the western Indian Ocean, while the Chinese ceramic industry

responded to the Tang Dynasty's opening up to maritime trade. Archaeological discoveries in Kenya and recent studies by Chinese scholars suggest it was only at the turn of the ninth century that Chinese ceramics became one of the principal components of regular trade between China and eastern Africa (Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens 2005), while Indo-Pacific glass beads appear to have been introduced in quantity into eastern Africa almost two centuries earlier (Wood, this volume). In concentrating on the analysis of regional and global contexts, it seems suitable to offer the following four-phase development of Chinese ceramics found in eastern Africa: phase I (800–950/80 CE), phase II (950/80–1220/50 CE), phase III (1220/50–1430/50 CE) and phase IV (1430/50–1500/10 CE).

p.435

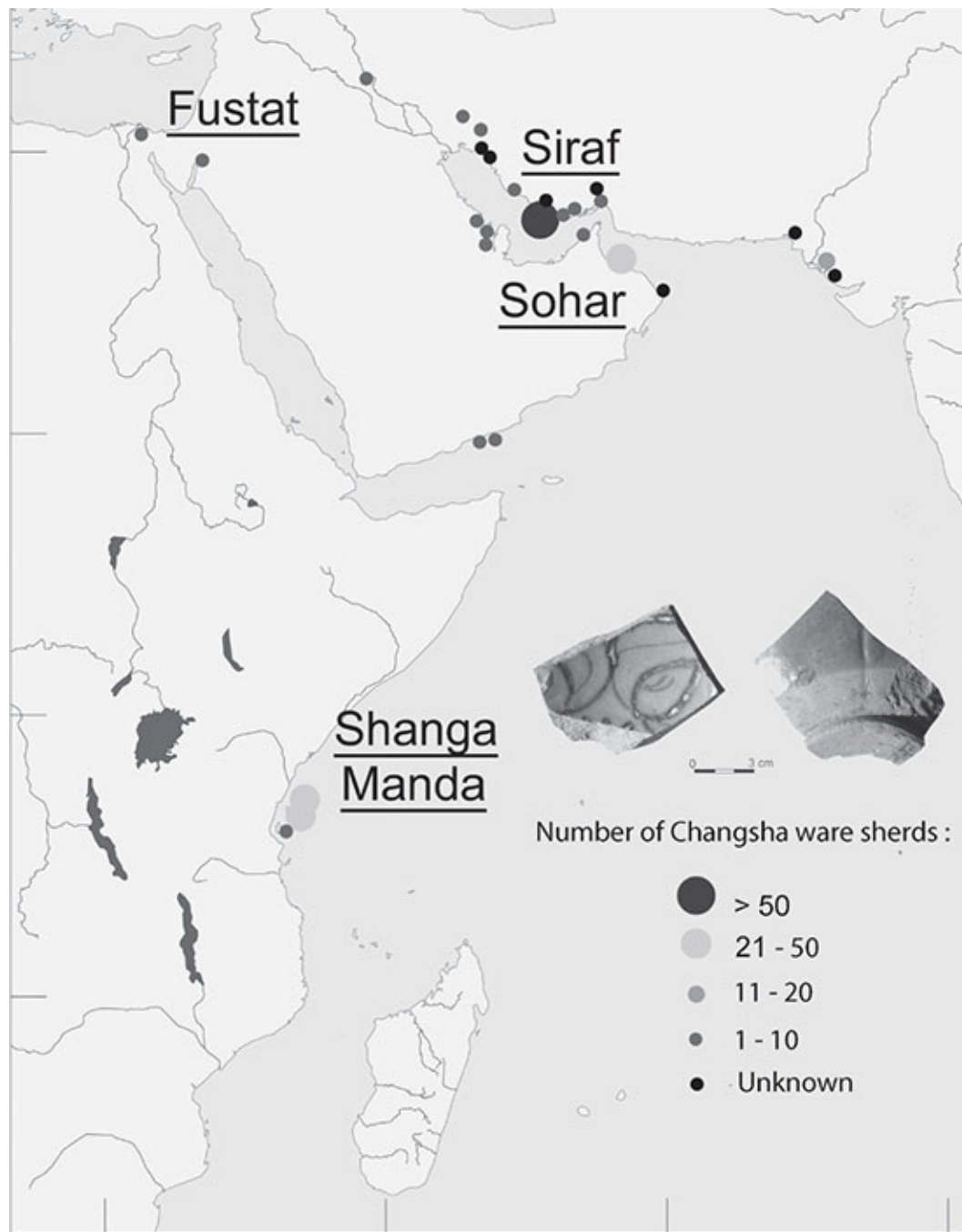
Phase I (800–950/80 CE)

Chinese archaeologists have recently worked on 9,552 Chinese ceramic sherds retrieved from 39 Kenyan sites, and have identified 97 sherds (1.02 per cent of the corpus) that can be dated to the ninth–mid-tenth century (Liu *et al.* 2012). The earliest corpus comprises underglazed iron brown-painted stoneware from the Tongguan kiln sites in Hunan Province (known as Changsha ware), green-glazed stoneware from the Yue kilns site (Zhejiang province), green-glazed stoneware from Guangdong Province kiln sites, and Northern white-glazed stoneware and its imitations produced in the Fanchang kiln site (Anhui province) (Qin 2015: 63–4). The earliest evidence comes from sites located in the central part of the Swahili coast: Manda and Shanga (Lamu Archipelago, Kenya; Chittick 1984; Horton 1996), Unguja Ukuu (Zanzibar; Horton and Clark 1985) and Dembeni in the Comoros (Allibert 1993; Pradines *et al.* 2016; Wright, this volume). At Shanga, 19 fragments of Changsha ware excavated from level II (radiocarbon dated *c.* 760–780 CE) have recently been assigned to ninth–tenth-century production (Horton 1996: 303; Qin 2015: 62).

Islamic decorative elements in Changsha ware may be interpreted as material proof of the important role that Muslim merchants played in the early distribution of Chinese ceramics in the Indian Ocean (Ma 1993). Numerous Chinese sources relate the presence of Arab-Persian communities in China, in particular in the ports of Canton, Yangzhou and Quanzhou, as well as on Hainan Island. Underwater archaeology confirms that, during this period, it was primarily Arab dhows that were sailing between the China Seas and the Indian Ocean (Flecker 2002; Krahel *et al.* 2010). For world-systems thinkers, the Swahili coast established its place as a semi-periphery in the Indian Ocean world-system from the seventh century onwards (Beaujard 2005, this volume). Yet mapping the diffusion of Changsha ware in the Indian Ocean suggests that the central Swahili coast constituted the earliest westward limits of maritime trade in Chinese ceramics ([Figure 39.2](#)).

Some fragments of green-glazed stoneware storage jars with thick sides and an oblong shape, most likely from Guangdong Province, have been found along with Chinese bowls

and dishes at Shanga, Manda, Unguja Ukuu and Dembeni. These have been widely used as containers in long-distance maritime trade, for instance to carry Changsha ware bowls discovered from the Belitung shipwreck cargo, which sunk around 920/30 CE in modern Indonesian waters (Krahl *et al.* 2010). Definitively different from the trade tradition in the Mediterranean during the Graeco-Roman period, where all storage jars were broken when arriving at the final destination, Chinese stoneware jar containers appear to have been used by sailors for packing, and kept by inhabitants of the ports to use over long periods. Thus, due to the long production cycle and the long utilisation period, the jar sherds are generally of a low level of reliability as chronological indicators. Meanwhile, however, these artefacts provide rich information on trade networks. The Guangdong province jar sherds excavated from eastern African ports offer material evidence of the involvement of the Guangzhou port in ninth–tenth-century Sino-African exchanges. Fujian and Guangzhou's ports in particular served as gateways for India and Africa. Guangzhou was exceptionally favoured by historical contingency; from the mid-eighth century, it gradually became the most important eastern port for the Indian Ocean monsoon trade, and the first major port importing West Asian and African goods into China.

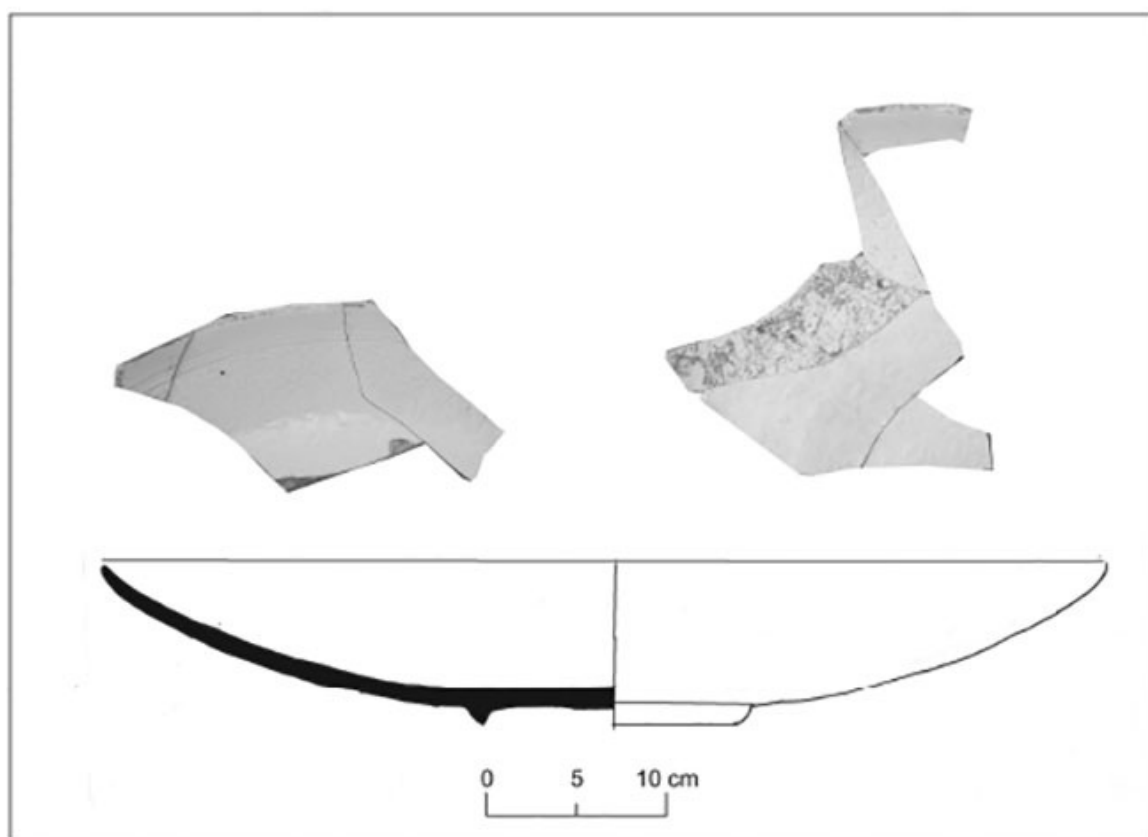
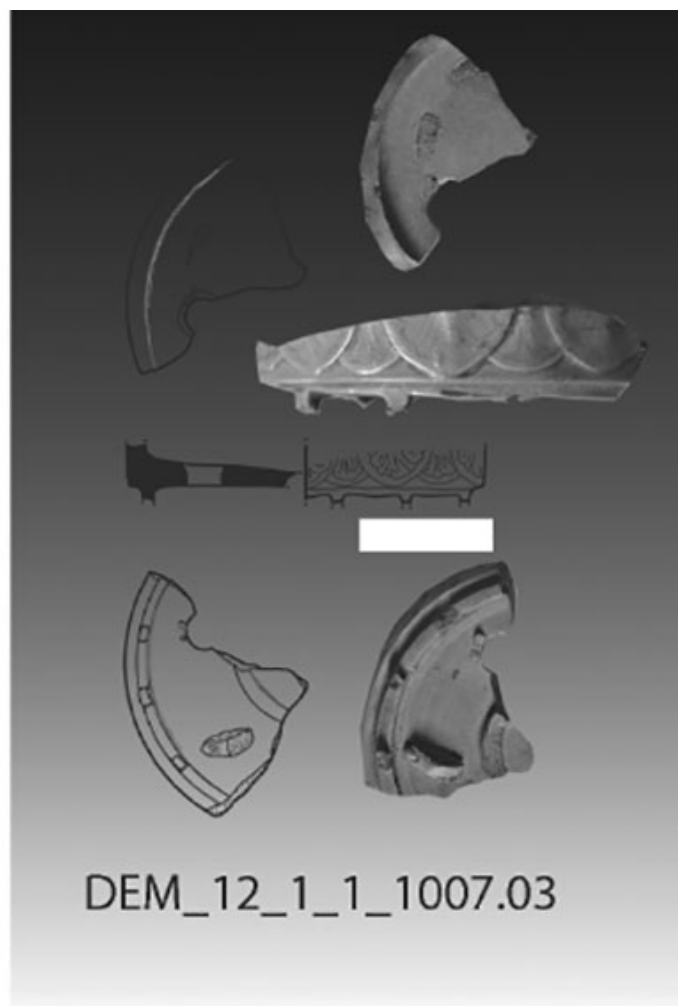


[Figure 39.2](#) Distribution map of Changsha ware sherds in Arabia and Africa (© B. Zhao)

Phase II (950/80–1220/50 CE)

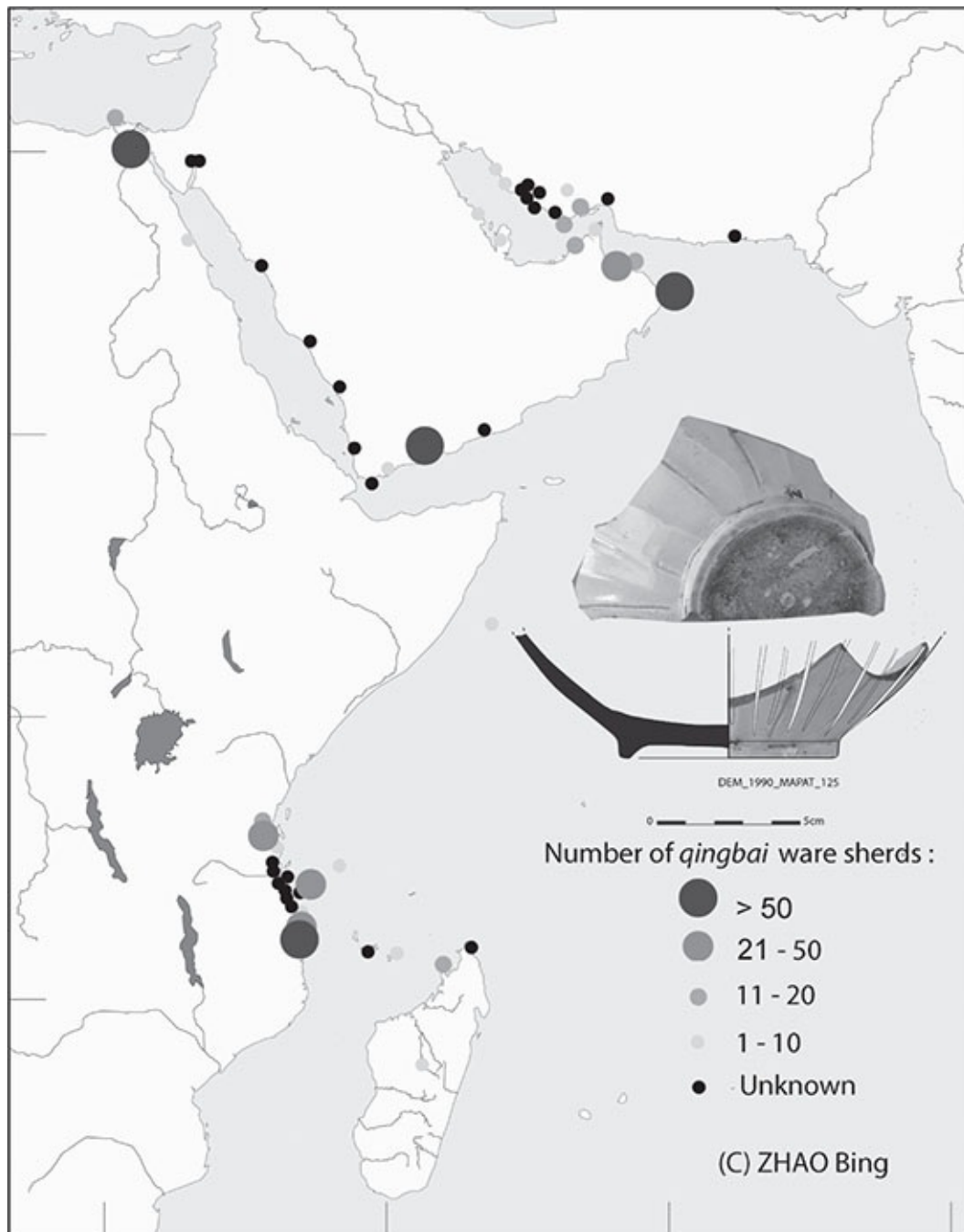
According to the Japanese scholar Terada (1988: 97–8), the richness of Swahili city-states was closely linked to trade with China, where Chinese demand for exotic natural products from eastern Africa increased considerably from the eleventh century onward. In particular, it seems that there was a turning point in the latter part of the tenth or early eleventh century, when the quantities of Chinese ceramics being traded to southern latitudes increased immensely. The key sites where this change can be seen in eastern Africa are on the island of Mafia, and at Kilwa Kisiwani and Sanje ya Kati in the Kilwa

Archipelago. This southward diffusion of Chinese ceramics in eastern Africa might be linked closely with the spread of Islam. Chinese ceramics imported into eastern Africa during this period constitute mostly monochrome stonewares: southern Chinese *qingbai* ware, green-glazed stoneware from Zhejiang, Guangdong and Fujian Provinces, brown-glazed stoneware, as well as underglazed iron brown-painted stoneware from Guangdong Province (Figure 39.3a). The site of Sanje ya Kati has delivered exceptional high-quality northern wares: green-glazed stoneware from Yaozhou kiln sites (Shaanxi Province) and Ding-style white-ivory-glazed porcelain from Hebei Province (Figure 39.3b). The *qingbai* ware (stoneware and porcelain) constitutes the category most exported into eastern Africa during the whole of phase II ([Figure 39.4](#)).



[Figure 39.3](#) (a) Incense burner sherds, green glazed stoneware from the Yue kiln site, late tenth–early eleventh century, excavated from Dembeni site, Comoros Islands (photograph by S. Pradines, drawing by J. Marchand); (b) bowl sherds, Ding-style whiteware with moulded pattern on inside, Northern kiln site, latter half of twelfth century–early thirteenth century, from Sanje ya Kati, Tanzania (photograph and drawing by B. Zhao)

p.438



[Figure 39.4](#) Distribution map of *qingbai* ware sherds in Arabia and Africa (© B. Zhao)

Moreover, during the eleventh-century Chinese maritime expansion, more than 200 billion coins streamed out of China to become hard currency in East and Southeast Asia. To stop the overseas flow of costly metals, the Southern Song Government promoted overseas trading with silk textiles, ceramics, lacquer and other commodities. From the mid-twelfth century onwards, ceramics increased quickly to a quarter of all the foreign exchanges, becoming the first definitive Chinese export, and thus the leading indicator of global trade dynamism. It is attested that at several insular and coastal sites, for instance at Sanje ya Kati in Kilwa Bay, the number of eleventh–twelfth-century bowl fragments outpaced that of jars. We may thus observe that Chinese ceramics were no longer being introduced into Swahili city-states principally in the form of containers, as had been the case for phase I.

Nevertheless, green- or brown-glazed stoneware storage jars from Fujian and Guangdong still constituted a non-negligible portion of the Chinese corpus. During this phase, the most frequently recurring forms, aside from storage jars, are for the most part open forms such as bowls and small plates, among which bowl sherds are the major component. Closed forms such as jarlets, incense burners, bottles, ewers and boxes are, on the other hand, in the minority. Phase II utensils are small to medium in size: for the open forms, the diameter of the opening does not exceed 15 cm, and the height of the closed forms is less than 25 cm. According to recent research, Asian rice might have been cultivated along the central eastern African coast from the eleventh century onwards, and new culinary practices based on Asian rice consumption might have been established from that very moment (see Fleisher 2010). The overwhelming proportion of bowls among Chinese imports during this phase may be seen as supporting evidence of the domestication of rice culture and related practices on the central coast.

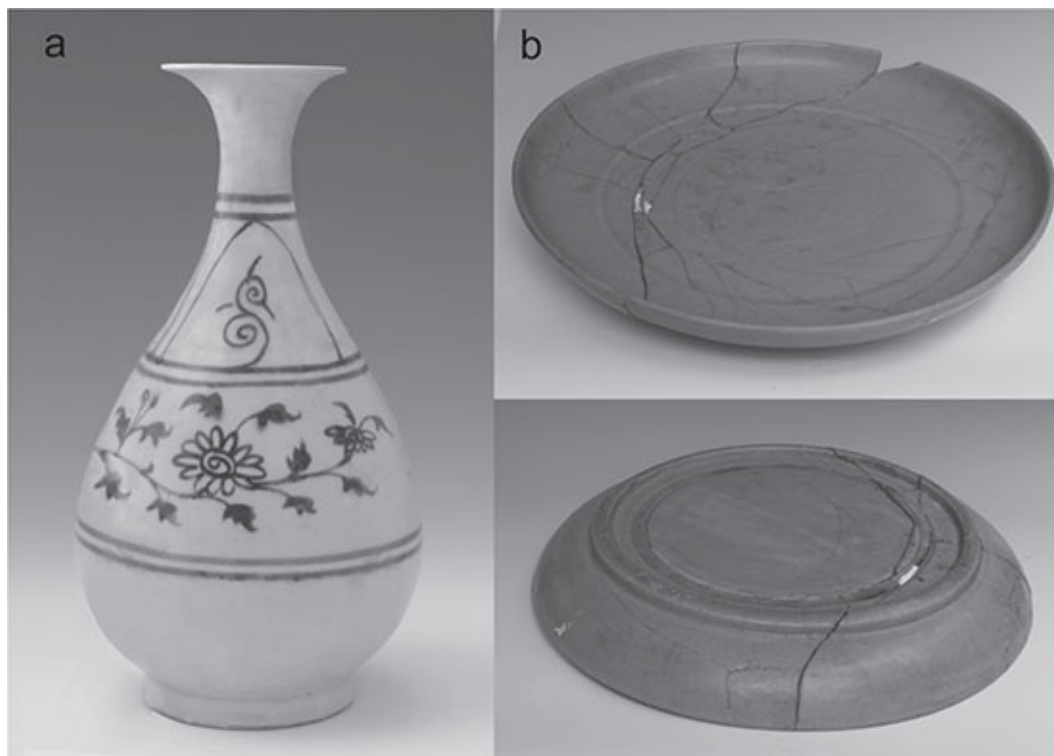
p.439

Phase III (1220/50–1430/50 CE)

Phase III is marked by the dominant presence of green-glazed stoneware from Longquan. The widespread distribution of this Longquan ware, and from Fujian coastal sites out of China during the thirteenth–fifteenth century, might be closely tied to both legal and illicit activities of Ryukyu and Fujian merchants (Ptak 2012). In the 1350/70s, a tiny number of blue-and-white porcelains and copper-red porcelains began to appear at sites located in the central area of the Swahili coast (Figure 39.5a). We notice also evidence of white-ivory-glazed porcelain ware from Fujian Province, *qingbai*-glazed porcelain from Jiangxi and Fujian Provinces, and green- or grey-green-glazed stoneware from Fujian Province. Two important shifts occurred during this phase. The first involves the appearance of Southeast Asian ceramics. Stoneware bowls with underglazed iron brown-painted decoration from North Vietnam kiln sites, dated to the thirteenth or early fourteenth century, have been excavated at Mombasa (Sassoon 1980) and Songo Mnara

(Zhao 2012). From the end of the fourteenth century onwards, Vietnamese blue-and-white wares were imported into eastern Africa (Zhao 2015).

Anthropologists and archaeologists have recently underscored the important role of feasts, which seem to have developed, beginning in the eleventh century, in Swahili ports (see Fleisher 2010). It was precisely during these shared meals that trade negotiations between merchants, or more political negotiations between the ruling clans, took place. The practice of holding feasts was the basis for symbolic exchanges; these events also served as occasions for local governments to establish and legitimise their paternal bonds with the community. The ostentatious tableware used at these feasts comprised richly decorated plates and bowls, whether Chinese ceramics, Islamic glazed ceramics, or beautifully crafted African pottery. Between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, Iranian *sgraffiato* appears to constitute the principal luxury tableware. From the end of the thirteenth century, the volume of green-glazed stoneware from Longquan seems to surpass that of Iranian *sgraffiato*. Longquan green-glazed stoneware thus became the principal tableware for feasting. The size of individual Chinese ceramics grew progressively larger. Beginning in the fourteenth century, large plates and bowls with diameters greater than 35 cm constitute the majority of Chinese imports (Figure 39.5b).



[Figure 39.5](#) (a, left) Bottle sherds, copper red ware, Jingdezhen kiln site, latter half of fourteenth century, from Gede, Kenya (photo by D.-S. Qin); (b, right) dish sherds, green-glazed stoneware, Longquan kiln complex, early fifteenth century, Ungwana, Kenya (Photographs by D.-S. Qin)

Evidence of the inland penetration of Chinese ceramics during phases I and II remains scarce: one sole Yue green-glazed stoneware sherd, having been published from the tenth century site of Mteza, located inland from the Kenyan coast (Insoll 2003: 159.) For phase III, Fujian and Longquan green-glazed stoneware sherds have been found at Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe, two main suppliers of gold during the medieval period (Prinsloo *et al.* 2005). This asymmetry between diffusion on the coast and into the interior may be deceptive due to valuable archaeological work: future research may change this picture (Walz, this volume).

Phase IV (1430/50–1500/10 CE)

Phase IV is characterised by the dominant presence of blue-and-white porcelain from Jingdezhen (Oka *et al.* 2009; Qin 2015). Indeed, from the 1460s a double phenomenon may be observed in China. On the one hand, the Ming court decided to relax its policy of closure while, on the other hand, Southeast Asian merchants arriving in China on their own initiative expressed the desire to be freed of the tributary trade-system constraints. At the same time, merchants from Jiangnan began to invest heavily in the production and trade of Jingdezhen blue-and-white porcelains.

During Phase IV, Longquan green-glazed stoneware dwindled, while imitations produced at Jingdezhen as well as at Chaozhou and Huizhou (Guangdong Province) were imported. Regarding the volume, the quantities of Chinese-style ceramic sherds appear to increase sharply, exceeding those of Islamic ceramics. In addition, growth can be observed in the volume of Southeast Asian ceramics; the last included Vietnamese blue-and-white ware and green-glazed stoneware from Thailand. From the 1470s, large plates of Chinese green-glazed stoneware appear to be replaced by Myanmar green-glazed stoneware and opaque white-glazed earthenware.

A sherd's origin is clearly important to the study of trade partners and modalities of exchange. We have noticed that the periodisation of Chinese imports in eastern Africa shows parallels in the double evolution of trade networks in Asian waters and in the western Indian Ocean. The principal characteristics of each phase assemblage retrace the evolution of medieval Afro-Asian maritime trade. In fact, the ceramics industry both in China and in Southeast Asia is intimately related to the regional and global maritime trade networks. No particular type of Chinese ceramics is remarkably different in the corpus of Chinese-style ceramics found from eastern Africa. Consequently, we may speak of 'passive' trade. In fact, trade channels for Chinese ceramics toward the Indian Ocean are numerous: diplomatic gifts, tributary trade, legal private trade and illicit private trade. These channels may be intertwined with or superimposed on each other depending on the politico-commercial contexts. As a result, no one category of ceramics fell into a single commercial channel. In general, however, Chinese ceramics traded to the Swahili world

during the medieval era fell essentially into the indirect and multi-partner global trade system. The last would be replaced by direct, European mono-partner global trade from the early sixteenth century onwards.

p.441

Embodying mercantile elite power: consumption of Chinese ceramics in Swahili society

Numerous Chinese sources dated to the eleventh to fifteenth centuries evoke the high-profile nature of maritime trade. Regarding exchange between China and Southeast Asia, scholars point to its inequitable nature: fancy commodities such as ceramics and iron tools in exchange for high value natural products. This is true from a global trade viewpoint. But from a local eastern African perspective, we must note the changing value of Chinese ceramics. In fact, by virtue of their intrinsic qualities (ease of cleaning, durability, lightness, aesthetic), Chinese ceramics were much admired from the moment they were introduced into eastern Africa. In the absence of written data on the prices of Chinese ceramics in Swahili states, archaeological evidence such as rivet repair-holes and various secondary uses – sherds being widely reused as buttons, pendants, weights, spindle whorls, etc. – illustrate their high value or ‘material’ attraction. Furthermore, the percentage of Chinese-style ceramic sherds compared with the total number of sherds at a Swahili port site is typically less than 1 per cent, confirming the rarity of this commodity.

Most importantly, in Swahili city-states, the ‘exotic’ character of Chinese-style ceramics seems to have been intentionally valorised in various ritual contexts, such as public ceremonies, feasts and funerary trends. For example, it has been demonstrated that from the late thirteenth century at the latest, Chinese bottles and bowls were placed in niches inside Swahili houses (Chittick 1974 Vol. 1: 106, Vol. 2: pl. 139d). From the end of the thirteenth century onwards, the presence of Chinese ceramics in mosques is noted by archaeologists at several sites. Swahili cemeteries are observed to be located mainly inside the walls of the city, woven into the urban fabric itself. For elite clans, funeral ceremonies were an important occasion for affirming their own magnificence and power. Archaeological evidence shows that from the end of the thirteenth century, green-glazed stoneware and later blue-and-white porcelain plates and bowls were cemented into the façades of pillared and domed tombs, funerary structures reserved for elite families (Wilson 1979: 34). Swahili pillar tombs represent a unique funerary tradition, the origins of which are largely unknown (see Horton, ‘Islamic Architecture’, this volume). The presence of Chinese-style ceramics in these sacred spaces is rich in meaning. They would have also functioned as a commemoration of the mercantile activities of the deceased. It is therefore reasonable to think that the consumption of Chinese-style ceramics in Swahili city-states did not constitute just a clue to the standard of living, but indicated membership in an

elite class, one capable of taking part in long-distance trade. Consequently, Chinese-style ceramics as ‘exotic’ objects actively contributed to the expanding power of merchant elites. Chinese ceramics, along with imported textiles and glass beads, can be seen in eastern Africa – more than anywhere else – as part of the constitution of authority and power.

References

Primary Chinese sources

- Daoyi zhilue* [*Description of the Barbarians of the Isles*], by Wang Dagan (1311–1350). Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 2000.
- Hou hanshu* [*The Book of the Later Han Dynasty*], compiled by Fan Ye (398–445), Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1965.
- Song Huiyao Jigao* [*The Song Dynasty Manuscript Compendium*], compiled by Xu Song (1781–1848). Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1975.
- Songshi* [*The History of the Song Dynasty*], compiled by Tuotuo (1314–1355), Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1977.

p.442

- Xin Tangshu* [*The New Book of the Tang Dynasty*], compiled by Ouyang Xiu (1007–1072), Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1975.
- Yuanshi* [*The History of the Yuan Dynasty*], compiled by Song Lian (1310–1381), Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1976.

Secondary sources

- Allibert, C. 1993. *Archéologie du 8ème au 13ème siècle à Mayotte*. Paris: INALCO, Fondation pour l’étude de l’archéologie de Mayotte, Dossier n°1.
- Beaujard, P. 2005. ‘The Indian Ocean in Eurasian and African world-systems before the sixteenth century’. *Journal of World History* 16 (4): 411–65.
- Bielenstein, H. 2005. *Diplomacy and Trade in the Chinese World, 589–1276*. Leiden: Brill.
- Chittick, H. N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Chittick, H. N. 1984. *Manda: Excavations at an Island Port on the Kenya Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Duyvendak, J. J. 1947. *China’s Discovery of Africa*. London: A. Probsthain.
- Flecker, M. 2002. *The Archaeological Excavation of the 10th Century Intan Shipwreck*. Oxford: Archaeopress, BAR International Series 1047.
- Fleisher, J. 2010. ‘Rituals of consumption and the politics of feasting on the eastern

- African coast, AD 700–1500'. *Journal of World Prehistory* 23 (4): 195–217.
- Gipouloux, F. 2009. *La Méditerranée asiatique: villes portuaires et réseaux marchands en Chine, au Japon et en Asie du Sud-Est, XVIe-XXIe siècle*. Paris: CNRS Edition.
- Guangzhou shi wenhuaju 2008. *Maritime Silk Road Cultural Heritage in Guangzhou*. Beijing: Wenwu chubansh.
- Horton, M. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. and Clark, C. 1985. 'Archaeological survey of Zanzibar'. *Azania* 20: 167–71.
- Huang, C.-Y. 2003. *Songdai haiwai maoyi* [The Foreign Trade under the Song Dynasty]. Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe.
- Insoll, T. 2003. *The Archaeology of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Juma, A. M. 2004. *Unguja Ukuu on Zanzibar: An Archaeological Study of Early Urbanism*. Studies in Global Archaeology 3. Uppsala: Uppsala University.
- Krahl, R., Guy, J., Raby, J. and Wilson, K. 2010. *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Winds*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution.
- Li, M. 2007. 'The 10th century world stage on the Sea of Java: metal cargos from the Cirebon wreck'. *The Palace Museum Journal* 6: 78–90.
- Liao, D.-K., 1990. 'Songdai yaren he yahang yu haiwai maoyi' [Yaren and Yahang of the Song Dynasty, their relationship with the maritime trade]. *Haijiaoshi yanjiu*, 1990 (2): 9–14.
- Lieber, H. H. 2014. 'The Siren of Cirebon, a tenth-century trading vessel lost in the Java Sea'. PhD diss., University of Leeds.
- Liu, Y. , Qin, D.-S., and Kiriamu, H. 2012. 'Kenniya binhai sheng Gedi gucheng yizhi chutu Zhongguo ciqi' [Chinese ceramics found from the coastal site of Gedi in Kenya]. *Wenwu*, 2012 (11): 37–60.
- Ma, W.-K. 1993. *Changsha yao ci zhuangshi yishu zhong de mouxie yisilan fengge*, *Wenwu* [Islamic-style elements in the decoration of Changsha ware], 1993 (5): 87–94.
- Murdoch, G. P. 1959. *Africa: Its Peoples and Their Culture History*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Oka, R., Dussubieux, L., Kusimba, C. and Gogte, V. 2009. 'The impact of "imitation" industries and Imperial restrictions on Chinese ceramic commercial exports in the Indian Ocean maritime exchange, ca 1200–1700'. In *Scientific Research on Historical Asian Ceramics: Proceedings of the Fourth Symposium at the Freer Gallery of Art*, edited by B. McCarty, 175–85. London: Archetype Publications.
- Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, M. 2005. 'Une denrée recherchée: la céramique chinoise importée dans le golfe arabo-persique, IX^e-XIV^e siècles'. *Mirabilia Asiatica* 2: 69–88.
- Pradines, S. 2009. 'L'île de Sanjé ya Kati (Kilwa, Tanzanie): un mythe Shirâzi bien réel'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 44 (1): 49–73.

- Pradines, S. 2010. *Gedi, une cité portuaire swahilie: Islam médiéval en Afrique orientale*. Monographies d'archéologie islamique. Ifao: Le Caire, 302.
- Pradines, S., Renel, H., Veyssier, D. and Zhao, B. 2016. 'Ironi Be (Dembeni, Mayotte) Rapport de fouille 2015'. *Nyame Akuma* 85: 44–56.
- Prinsloo, L., Wood, C., Loubser, N., Verryyn, S. M. C. and Tiley, S. 2005. 'Re-dating of Chinese celadon shards excavated on Mapungubwe Hill, a 13th-century Iron Age site in South Africa, using Raman Spectroscopy, XRF and XRD'. *Journal of Raman Spectroscopy* 36 (8): 806–16.
- Ptak, R. 2012. 'The Ryukyu network in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries'. In *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization*, edited by D. P. Chattopadhyaya; Vol. III, part 7, 'The trading world of the Indian Ocean, 1500–1800', edited by O. Prakash, 462–82. Delhi: Chennai, Chandigarh, Centre for Studies in Civilizations.
- Qin, D.-S. 2015. 'Kenniya chutu zhongguo ciqi de chubu guancha' [Preliminary analysis on Chinese ceramics excavated from Kenya]. In *Ancient Silk Trade Routes: Selected Works from Symposium on Cross Cultural Exchanges and Their Legacies in Asia*, edited by D.-S. Qin and J. Yuan, 61–82. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing.
- Sassoon, H. 1980. 'Excavations at the site of early Mombasa'. *Azania* 15: 1–42.
- Shen, F.-W. 2010. *Zhongguo yu Feizhou de wenhua jiaoliushi* [Cultural Exchanges Between China and Africa]/ Ürümqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe.
- Terada, T. 1988. *Zheng He – Lianjie Zhongguo yu Yisilan shijie de hanghaijia* [Zheng He – The Navigator Linked China to Islamic World], translation by Zhuang Jinghui. Beijing: Haiyang chubanshe.
- Thierry, F. 1997. 'Le trésor de la rue Guanfu (Canton) et la circulation monétaire sous les Han du Sud'. *Revue numismatique*, 6e série, 152: 379–408.
- Vallet, E. 2015. 'Les messagers du grand large: ambassades and ambassadeurs entre mer Rouge et océan Indien'. In *La figure de l'ambassadeur entre mondes éloignés: ambassadeurs, envoyés officiels et représentations diplomatiques entre Orient islamique, Occident latin et Orient chrétien (XIe–XVIIe siècle)*, edited by N. Drocourt, 111–51. Rennes: PUR.
- Wan, M. 2007. 'Ming chu 'Gongshi' Xinzheng' '' [New research on tribute system and trade system in the early Ming period], *Mingshi yanjiu congkan* 7: 91–109.
- Wheatley, P. 1975. 'East Africa as envisaged by the Chinese'. In *East Africa and the Orient*, edited by N. Chittick and R. Rotberg, 84–137. New York: Africa Publishing Co.
- Wilson, T. 1979. 'Swahili funerary architecture of the North Kenya coast'. In *The Swahili Houses and Tombs of the Coast of Kenya*, edited by J. de V. Allen and T. H. Wilson, 33–46. London: Art and Archaeology Research Papers [supplement].
- Zhao, B. 2012. 'Global trade and Swahili cosmopolitan material culture: Chinese-style

ceramic shards from Sanje ya Kati and Songo Mnara (Kilwa, Tanzania)'. *Journal of World History* 23 (1): 41–86.

Zhao, B. 2015. 'Contribution de la céramique chinoise à l'histoire médiévale swahili (IXe–XVIe siècles)'. *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et des Belles Lettres*, 2014 (1) (Jan.–Mar.): 353–83.

Objects of exchange

40

CURRENCIES OF THE SWAHILI WORLD

Karin Pallaver

Introduction

The historical evidence on the currencies in use in the Swahili world dates back to the eighth century, when the first coins were minted on the coast. Swahili coins were part of a complex monetary system characterised by the simultaneous circulation and acceptance of commodity currencies such as beads, cloth and grains. Sustained minting of Swahili coins continued until the fifteenth century, when European intrusions into the Swahili commercial and political world promoted the circulation of international trade coins, such as Spanish piasters and, later, Austrian Maria Theresa thalers. Coining on the coast resurfaced sporadically in later periods, such as in Mombasa in the seventeenth century, but it was largely abandoned as a consequence of the introduction of foreign currencies.

The currencies in use in the Swahili world had both monetary and symbolic functions that overlapped and converged into shared concepts of value and broader aesthetic spheres (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2016). Economic and anthropological approaches have enabled only a small part of the complexity of African monetary transactions and economies to be explored and understood (Guyer 2004). This complexity can be unravelled only through an analyses of both the monetary use of coins and currency objects, and the symbolic, ritual and aesthetic meanings that they acquired when they left the economic circles. The analyses of the economic and social meanings of different forms of money (Zelizer 1997) can tell us how value is constituted in a specific society, and how different forms of currency are related to each other. The analysis of their relations and of the concurrent circulation of multiple, and complementary (Kuroda 2007b), commodity and coin currencies can illuminate our understanding of the specificities of African monetary systems.

This chapter reconstructs the history of the currencies used in the Swahili world. The first part explores coins issued by Swahili towns from the eighth until the sixteenth

century. The second part focuses on commodity currencies that were used in the interior regions of eastern Africa, especially after the development of the international ivory trade since the early nineteenth century. The third part looks at the imported coins that started to be used in the Swahili world after the arrival of the Europeans in the fifteenth century, and ends with the introduction of colonial money in the late nineteenth century.

p.448

Swahili coins (c. 800–1500)

The minting of coins on the Swahili coast began in the eighth century CE. Only some of the Swahili towns minted coins. Minting was dominated by Kilwa Kisiwani, but mints operated also in Shanga, Zanzibar and Pemba. The historical and archaeological importance of these coins has been largely related to their being some of the only textual evidence available for the dating and naming of kings and their dynasties along the Swahili coast (Chittick 1965, 1973; Freeman-Grenville 1971; Middleton 2003). The first studies on these coins were therefore confined to numismatics analysis and the coins were used by historians and archaeologists as chronological markers (on the connection between the Swahili coins and early Swahili documents such as the Kilwa Chronicles, and the related debate between Freeman-Grenville and Chittick, see Perkins 2013: 43–9). Recent studies have, however, moved attention to the different uses of these coins and the symbolism connected to them, also in relation to non-metallic currencies such as beads (Perkins 2013; Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2012, 2016).

The value and circulation of Swahili coins was determined by their metal content, the monetary systems of which they were part, and their association with particular forms of authority (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2012: 19). Coins from the eastern African coast have significant differences from other coins minted in the framework of Islamic coining tradition: they bear no mint name, date or denomination, and no acknowledgement of the caliph (Walker 1936). But they share also some similarities, such as the sense of the words of the legend that runs continuously from one side to the other and the name of the ruler (Brown 1993).

The biggest part of the coins found in excavations along the coast are copper coins produced in Kilwa ([Figure 40.1](#); Freeman-Grenville 1959: 255; Perkins *et al.* 2014). Copper coins of the Kilwa type were minted also in Zanzibar from the twelfth to the fourteenth century, and possibly in Pemba (Brown 1993; Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2016). Kilwa-type coins were of a relatively regular size and weight, and were characterised by a rhyme between the two sides: the obverse affirms the ruler's faith in Allah, the reverse has an epithet of Allah chosen to rhyme with the ruler's name. Coins of different issues circulated together, and Freeman-Grenville (1971) argues that no coin type was ever

withdrawn. Coins bearing the names of sultans who ruled some centuries apart were in fact in circulation together in the sixteenth century (Chittick 1967: 195).



[*Figure 40.1*](#) Kilwa-type copper coin, from excavations at Songo Mnara (Photograph by S. Wynne-Jones)

p.449

Many of these coins have been found in Kilwa and Mafia, and a small number in Zanzibar and Pemba, some in Oman and one at Great Zimbabwe (Brown 1991). The circulation of Kilwa copper coins was limited and they seem not to have filtered into Indian Ocean markets in significant quantities (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2012; Perkins *et al.* 2014). This suggests a local use and is a clear indication of the connection between these coins and the authority of specific rulers, rather than to a universal standard of value (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2016). The sultans of Kilwa could control the particular type of knowledge needed to mint the coins and had the authority to circulate them for commercial purposes (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2012: 30). But these coins also acquired ritual and symbolic functions. Kilwa-type copper coins were, for example, recently excavated around a fifteenth-century tomb at Songo Mnara, testifying to their symbolic and commemorative functions (Perkins *et al.* 2014).

Copper was a valuable metal in eastern Africa (Mapunda, this volume) and could be easily obtained to produce coins. On the other hand, the absence of local sources of silver limited the possibility of using this metal. Silver coins were minted in Shanga, northern

Kenya, from the eighth–tenth century (Horton 1996; Brown 1996), Pemba in the tenth–eleventh century, and Kilwa in the eleventh century (Chittick 1967). The latter are known mainly from the hoard at Mtambwe Mkuu ([Figure 40.2](#); LaViolette, this volume). The coins excavated at Shanga are Islamic coins and all undated. These coins are very thin and Helen Brown (1996: 369) suggests that they could have been coined from melted imported silver coins. They were produced by skilled craftsmen, as is testified by the high standard of production. The quantity of different dies attests that coining was spread over a period of many years (Horton 1996: 376).

Gold coins were issued by the Kilwa mint in the fourteenth century. These are the only coins reporting the name ‘Kilwa’ on them, and they can be situated in the mainstream Islamic coining tradition (Brown 1991, 1993). Only three examples have been found. Even if there is no clear evidence on their use, it might be supposed that they were used in international trade, given that they had a similar weight to the dinar, the standard Indian ocean currency (Horton and Middleton 2000: 93). The very limited number of surviving gold coins suggests that, contrary to copper coins, the gold ones were melted down for other purposes or used as gifts or tribute rather than as trade currency (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2012).

The existence of a tri-metallic coinage has produced different interpretations of their spheres of circulation. Middleton, for instance, argues that gold and silver coins were used as counters, vouchers, or tokens of value and were representations of the authority of the sultan, whereas copper coins were used in small trade by ‘unrelated buyers and sellers’ (Middleton 2003: 515–16). However, a deposit of copper coins at Songo Mnara suggests that they were able to function as a store of wealth, taken out of circulation and deposited with other valuable artefacts such as beads (Perkins *et al.* 2014).



[Figure 40.2](#) The Mtambwe Mkuu hoard (Photograph by M. Horton)

The coins of the Swahili coast were not only the manifestation of Islamic values and the authority of the sultans, they were also part of a complex system in which different currencies circulated together in a shared system of attributing value (Perkins *et al.* 2014). Coin currencies were used in local and regional trade, but they were also related to non-coin currencies, such as beads and iron axe heads, that were probably used in daily small transactions. The comparative rarity of coins from the later levels at Shanga, for example, suggests that commercial life, whether domestic or international, could be conducted without the regular use of coins (Brown 1996). The findings at Songo Mnara suggest that carnelian and aragonite beads were probably used as stores of value; they may also have been used alongside glass beads as currency for small-value, daily transactions (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2012; Perkins *et al.* 2014). Currency objects and coins were sometimes remade locally, in order to respond to transactional needs and to create different scales of value. The several half- and quarter coin fractions excavated at Songo Mnara suggest the need for smaller denominations to be used in daily transactions and also reflect the existence of a shared system of value in the community (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2012: 29).

These currency objects had a fungibility that created a fluid transition between their commodity and currency usages (Wynne Jones and Fleisher 2016). This is true for currencies such as beads or cloth, but can be valid also for coins. Pierced copper coins have been found in various sites along the coast, such as Shanga (Brown 1996: 368 n.27), Kilwa (Freeman-Grenville 1957: 156) and one specimen from Songo Mnara (Wynne Jones and Fleisher 2012: 32–3). The piercing of coins may indicate that copper coins had simultaneous monetary and decorative functions (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2012: 33). Another possibility could be that these coins were pierced and put on strings to facilitate their transport and counting. This practice is testified for later periods in various parts of eastern Africa, especially in connection with small-denomination currencies such as beads and cowries. The quite significant number – 5 per cent of the total – of pierced copper coins found in one of the collections analysed by Freeman-Grenville (1957), could possibly suggest an early development of this practice, given that the coins drilled were not silver or gold ones, but rather of smaller value, i.e. copper coins.

The minting of Swahili coins lasted until the arrival of the Europeans in the very late fifteenth century. From this point onwards, new currencies entered the Swahili world that originated from the incorporation of the Swahili world in new global trade networks. International trade coins came into use on the coast, whereas imported commodity currencies started to be widely adopted in the interior, especially after the increased development of the ivory and slave trades beginning in the early nineteenth century (Biginagwa and Mapunda, this volume).

Commodity currencies in the Zanzibar commercial hinterland

Commodity currencies in use on the coast very likely penetrated inland through trade exchanges. It was, however, from the beginning of the nineteenth century that commodities such as cloth, beads and cowrie shells crystallised into a monetary form, and became part of a monetary system characterised by the adoption of standard units of currency (Pallaver forthcoming). In this period, the area in which Swahili traders operated expanded dramatically, owing to the huge increase in the demand for East African ivory and slaves (Sheriff 1987). African traders organised their caravans to the coast and Swahili merchants settled in the commercial towns of the interior in order to deal in ivory and slaves. The connection of the interior regions to the coastal economy in a more systematic way resulted in the ‘commodification’ of the local economies (Glassman 1995: 36), through the import of goods that were invested with new exchange value and emerged as currencies to facilitate market transactions (Hopkins 1973: 67).

p.451

Imported cloth played the most important role in commercial transactions throughout the Zanzibar hinterland as it was the currency generally used to buy ivory and slaves. In the nineteenth century, cloth became the most widespread means of accumulating and storing wealth, as its possession was strictly related to political power. African chiefs distributed cloth to their followers as a way to secure loyalty and political support (Nolan 1977: 27). Imported cloth was also used to pay caravan porters’ wages (Rockel 2006: 211–28). In the eighteenth century, textiles imported from India dominated the East African market. However, by the mid-1830s, American cloth was rivalling Indian cloth, overcoming it by the late 1840s. American unbleached cloth was called in eastern Africa *merikani* or *merikani*, and it was particularly valued because it was thicker, more durable and of a generally superior quality than British, Indian or locally made cloth (Prestholdt 2008; Pallaver forthcoming). The standard unit of cloth currency in relation to which the value of export goods was measured was the *doti merikani*. It measured 4 yards on the coast, but was readapted in the markets of the interior in order to cover transport costs: it measured 3½ yards in Tabora and 3 yards in Ujiji (Becker 1881: Vol. 1: 465; Hore 1892: 71).

In some areas of the Zanzibar commercial hinterland, metal wires (*masango*) were used as an alternative to cloth. Brass wire was in great demand in the interlacustrine region, in parts of present-day Kenya and beyond Lake Tanganyika (Tosh 1970: 115). Cloth and metal wires were used in a complementary relationship with small denomination currencies, particularly glass beads (on complementarity among monies, see Kuroda 2007a). Where and when glass beads started to be used as currency in the interior is not clear. Excavations in Swahili towns along the coast have produced beads of various types that were used in trade with inland peoples (Middleton 1992: 38). The nineteenth-century demand for ivory and slaves led to the import of huge quantities of glass beads produced in Venice (Pallaver 2016).

Glass beads (Wood, this volume) had some characteristics that made them particularly

suitable for being used as currency along the caravan roads. Since beads, as opposed to cloth, could be split up in small units, they became the most widespread means of buying food during caravan journeys. Daily food rations for porters and slaves were often paid in beads. Strands of glass beads were measured in standard scales of value. They were bought by weight on the coast and then they were put on strings of a standard length to be used for trade purposes in the interior (Burton 1859: 425). The *khete* was the standard unit of currency for beads and measured from the elbow to the thumb and back.

In the markets of the main commercial towns that developed along the caravan roads, such as Msene, Tabora and Ujiji, a standard currency in beads was adopted in the second part of the nineteenth century. These were cylindrical red and blue glass beads called *sofi* in eastern Africa and *cannettone* in Venice. The first evidence of the use of *sofi* beads as standard market currency comes from Msene, Western Unyamwezi, where a community of coastal and Swahili traders had settled to deal in ivory and slaves (Burton 1859: 188–96). The use of a standard currency in beads in the market of Msene was an early development compared with other towns of the interior. In 1858, when Burton visited the market of Ujiji, no standard currency was in use, and *sofi* beads were in demand along with other types of beads. However, from the 1870s onwards, *sofi* beads became the recognised currency also in Ujiji; their rate of exchange was fixed on a cloth standard and money changers could make good profits (Brown 1971: 621). In Tabora, a recognised currency in beads was also in use (Pallaver 2009). Given that the adoption of a standard unit of bead currency occurred in those markets where there was a community of resident Swahili traders, it seems fair to assume that this change was encouraged or favoured by their presence. There is evidence of coastal traders' attempts to regulate commercial practices in the interior markets, as happened in Ujiji with the local practices of pricing goods (Brown 1971: 621).

p.452

The use of multiple currencies characterised eastern African trade networks. The maintenance of a single type of currency for a wide range of transactions seems to have been achieved in precolonial Africa only under very limited conditions, one of which was political centralisation (Guyer 1995). In the area where Swahili traders operated, this seems to have been the case only in Buganda, where the *kabaka* favored the adoption of cowrie shells as currency. Cowries were introduced to Buganda by coastal traders at the beginning of the nineteenth century, became popular by the mid-nineteenth century and started to be used as a recognised means of exchange under *kabaka* Mutesa I (1857–1884). According to Burton (1859: 448), cowries were collected in various places along the Swahili coast between Ras Hafun and Mozambique and their trading was in the hands of Muslim merchants. The development of commercial relationships with Swahili traders was at the origin of the import of shells and of the subsequent creation of a unified currency area in Buganda, but the imposition of fines and taxes in shells by the *kabaka* had a parallel important role (Médard 2007: 134). Like beads and cloth, the use of cowries as currency

was characterised by the adoption of a standard unit of value. Cowries were bored and put on strings of one hundred shells, called *kiasa*, that could be divided into halves of 50 each, and again into five parts of ten each, the smallest division being five shells (Pallaver 2015). *Merikani* cloth was used in Buganda in connection with shells, but its import, distribution and possession was regulated by the king (Reid 2002: 151–8). Swahili traders could only sell cloth to the king and his representatives and were prohibited from trading outside the capital (Médard 2007: 133). These currencies originated from the Swahili world, but were controlled by African traders and political institutions.

Being commodities, glass beads and cloth were also fungible items, and once they left economic circles they could acquire various social, ritual and cultural meanings. Imported cloth was used to make burial cloth, sail cloth or was tailored (Prestholdt 2008: 75), whereas glass beads and cowries were used to make different sorts of ornaments. They also had ritual and symbolic uses. The explorer Henry Morton Stanley, for example, was told by his guide that there was a custom, both among the coastal traders and the local people, of throwing white beads into the water before crossing Lake Tanganyika to appease Kabogo, the god of the lake (Stanley [1872] 2006: 347; Cameron and Markham 1875: 199). Cowries were used in Buganda during wedding ceremonies to show the affection of the groom for the bride: the bride received shells from her husband before entering his house, before sitting down, before eating his food and before going to bed (Roscoe 1911: 80). As for the Swahili coins discussed above, these currencies could move out from their monetary use and become fungible items or acquire symbolic and ritual values. Commodities currencies were bought on the coast by traders going inland. They acquired them with international trade coins that came into use in the Swahili world through trade contacts with European and American merchants.

International trade coins and local small change (sixteenth–nineteenth century)

The coins in use in the Swahili world since the sixteenth century reflect connections to ocean trade routes as well as the shifting influence of European powers in coastal political and commercial life. The commercial contacts of the Swahili merchants with both European and Islamic trade networks favoured the circulation of various types of international trade coins, among which the most important were the Spanish (pieces of eight) and Mexican silver piasters, and, from the eighteenth century, the Maria Theresa (MT) thalers or dollars ([Figure 40.3](#)). These coins were regular-issue coins that had legal tender status in their country of origin, but acquired a circulation far beyond their national borders and were accepted depending on recognition, familiarity and trust (Flynn *et al.* 1999: 155).

The Spanish dollar was first struck in 1497 and then extensively minted in Mexico starting from 1535. It circulated widely in the world and became the most popular trade coin in Asia, especially in China (Flynn *et al.* 1999: 155). We have evidence of the use of these coins in eastern Africa since the seventeenth century. When visiting Mombasa in 1666/7, Captain William Alley reported the use of silver pieces of eight in the town (Freeman-Grenville 1959: 258). Piasters circulated between the Mascarenes, Madagascar, Mozambique and the East African coast in large quantities (Machado 2014: 235). By the mid-seventeenth century there was a reduction in the fineness of the Spanish dollars that led to its demonetisation in the British colonies. In the second half of the eighteenth century the fineness was further reduced, and this favoured the acceptance of the MT thaler (Stride 1956). This coin had been issued for the first time by the Vienna mint in 1751, the year of the coronation of Empress Maria Theresa, and soon became very popular in trade networks in the Middle East and in the Red Sea region. For this reason, when the Maria Theresa died, the Austrian government decided to continue issuing the coins, all bearing the inscription of 1780, the year of the Empress' death (Pankhurst 1963; Kuroda 2007b).

The use of Austrian thalers along the coast is testified since 1754 (Campbell 2005: 288) and by the end of the eighteenth century they were the currency most commonly in use (Freeman-Grenville 1959: 259). Charles Guillain (1856–7 Vol. 2: 397), during his visit to eastern Africa between 1846 and 1848, reported that Mexican dollars, 5-franc coins, East India Company rupees and Spanish piasters were in use in the coastal markets, but that the only coin having a legal and regular course was the MT thaler. In Kilwa, Lamu, Pemba and Mombasa the thaler was used as a unit of account, whereas in Zanzibar it was used as a means of exchange and as a store of value.



[Figure 40.3](#) Austrian Maria Theresa thaler, 1781 (Uppsala University Coin Cabinet, alvin-record: 101181)

p.454

With the exception of the East India Company rupees, which circulated in small quantities in Zanzibar, these international trade coins did not have subsidiary coins. Locally minted small denomination coins circulated in some towns along the coast. In Mombasa, for example, small bronze coins were minted during the reign of Governor Salim ibn Ahmad al-Mazrui (1826–1835). These coins had no date, and the inscription in Arabic ‘struck’ ‘(in) Mombasa’ (Guillain 1956–7 Vol. 2: 269; Freeman-Grenville 1959: 259). They were put into circulation at the value of one *kibaba* (small basket) of grain, in relation to the piaster (Guillain 1956–7 Vol. 2: 269). Similar coins with no date, but of similar legend and pattern, were issued in Lamu, more or less in the same period (Freeman-Grenville 1959: 259). In the early 1840s Sultan Said bin Sultan tried to amplify Zanzibar’s monetary system by the introduction of 5,000\$’ worth of copper pice from India (Burton 1872, Vol. 2: 405; Coupland [1939] 1968: 4).

Owing to the lack of small denomination coins, in the coastal markets broken sums were generally paid in *mtama* (sorghum), of which, according to Burton, exceedingly variable measures constituted the thaler (Burton 1872, Vol. 2: 405). The missionary Ludwig Krapf (1844) reports that in the island of Zanzibar smaller coins were exchanged or bought with corn, of which 40 measures (one measure corresponding to 5–7 pounds) were generally exchanged for one thaler.

The supply of international trade coins could not be controlled by Swahili traders and local authorities. After the outbreak of the American Civil War, for example, fewer MT thalers were imported by German merchants, who preferred to import English cotton cloth to replace American cotton cloth whose supplies had been cut by the war (Eagleton forthcoming b). In 1861, owing to the scarcity of thalers in Zanzibar, the sultan issued a notice in which various already circulating coins were declared legal tender and their value was fixed in MT thalers. These were the gold ounce, the English sovereign, the gold 20- and 10-franc coins and the silver 5-franc coins (Burton 1872, Vol. 2: 418; Eagleton forthcoming b). The Indian rupee was added to the sultan's list only in 1863, when the British Political Agent, Robert Playfair, asked Sultan Majid to add it to legal tender coins in order to promote the business activities of the Indian merchants. According to Eagleton (forthcoming b) it was from 1863, and not before, that the Indian rupee became the dominating currency along the Swahili coast.

The last coins issued in the Swahili world before the European partition were ordered by Sultan Barghash in the 1880s. These silver and copper coins were not minted locally, as no minting technology was available anymore on the coast, but were commissioned by the sultan from European mints through the mediation of a French trader, Henri Greffülhe, and later of a British company, Smith Mackenzie and Co. (Eagleton forthcoming a; Pawelczack 2010: 61–2; Freeman–Grenville 1959: 260). The coins that circulated on the coast allowed the connection between Swahili and international trade networks. They were then used to buy commodities to be employed as currency in the interior markets. International trade coins had, in fact, no monetary value in the interior regions, though they were occasionally prized as ornaments. There is scanty evidence of African chiefs in the interior using thalers. Lieut. Shergold Smith, the leader of the first CMS party to Uganda, for example, reported that he received 200 MT thalers from a Ganda chief to buy a gun with (Thomas 1952: 96–8). However, this was not common.

The imposition of European colonial rule resulted in a *de facto* acceptance of the currencies in circulation. In interior regions, cloth, cowries and beads were used by European officers to pay African troops and were accepted in the payment of taxes in the early colonial period. Later, Great Britain and Germany both maintained the rupee as currency. The German government introduced the German East Africa rupee, whereas the British officials recognised the Indian rupee and the copper pice as the currency of British East Africa and Uganda protectorates. The history of the introduction of colonial currencies in East Africa is one of many failures that sheds light on the problematic nature of colonial control. As an example, the copper pice was too high a denomination to circulate in Uganda and therefore cowries continued to be used. To replace shells, in 1905 the British introduced cent coins. As a way to promote the use of colonial money, the low denomination coins were all minted with a hole in them so that people could put them on strings as they did with beads and cowries (Pallaver 2015). Nonetheless, commodity currencies continued to circulate, as the colonial process of currency standardisation and

rationalisation was contradicted by the different value that eastern African societies attached to different forms of currency. Multiple currencies continued to circulate, conflicting with the intention of the colonial powers to create a uniform colonial space characterised by the circulation of a single currency.

p.455

Conclusion

The simultaneous circulation of coins and commodity currencies characterises the history of the Swahili world over the long term. Commodity currencies such as cloth, beads, iron axe heads and coins were in use in precolonial Swahili towns (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2016). These items had been traded for centuries between the coast and the interior and in the nineteenth century crystallised into a monetary form, their value being related to international trade coins on the coast. Some currencies were introduced and adopted as a consequence of the intervention of political authorities, such as the sultans of Kilwa, the *kabaka* of Buganda, or European colonial governments. Other types of currencies were introduced by traders and were adopted as a result of commercial practices. This chapter has argued that the presence of Swahili merchants promoted the adoption of standard currencies in the areas where they operated.

The currencies in use in the Swahili world were objects that performed monetary as well as ritual and symbolic functions. A long-term historical analysis of coin- and non-coin currencies can be extremely valuable in providing information about the economy, power, symbolism and culture of the societies using them (Perkins 2013: 10). The value attributed to various forms of currency was related to their exchange use, but also to the ways in which these objects were displayed and employed in ritual and cultural spheres.

References

- Becker, J. 1881. *La Vie en Afrique ou trois ans dans l'Afrique Centrale*, Vol. 1. Paris: J. Lebègue.
- Brown, B. 1971. 'Muslim influence on trade and politics in the Lake Tanganyika region'. *African Historical Studies* 4 (3): 617–29.
- Brown, H. W. 1991. 'Three Kilwa gold coins'. *Azania* 26: 1–4.
- Brown, H. W. 1993. 'Coins of East Africa: an introductory survey'. *Yarmouk Numismatics* 5: 9–16.
- Brown, H. W. 1996. 'The coins'. In *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the East Coast of Africa*, edited by M. Horton, 368–75. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.

- Burton, R. F. 1859. 'The lake regions of central equatorial Africa'. *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* 29: 1–472.
- Burton, R. F. 1872. *Zanzibar: City, Island and Coast*, Vol. 2. London: Tinsley Bros.
- Cameron, V. L. and Markham, C. P. 1875. 'Examination of the southern half of Lake Tanganyika'. *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* 45: 246–63.
- Campbell, G. 2005. *An Economic History of Imperial Madagascar 1750–1895: The Rise and Fall of an Island Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chittick, H. N. 1965. 'The "Shirazi" Colonization of East Africa'. *Journal of African History* 6 (3): 275–94.
- Chittick, H. N. 1967. 'A coin hoard from near Kilwa'. *Azania* 2: 194–8.
- Chittick, H. N. 1973. 'On the chronology and coinage of the Sultans of Kilwa'. *Numismatic Chronicle* 13: 193–200.

p.456

- Coupland, R. [1939] 1968. *The Exploitation of East Africa 1856–90: Slave Trade and the Scramble*. London: Faber.
- Eagleton, C. forthcoming a. 'Currency as commodity, as symbol of sovereignty and as subject of legal dispute: Henri Greffühle and the coinage of Zanzibar in the late 19th century'. In *Currencies of Commerce in the Greater Indian Ocean World*, edited by G. Campbell and S. Serels. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Eagleton, C. forthcoming b. 'How and why did the Rupee become the currency of Zanzibar and East Africa?'
- Flynn, D. O., Frost, L. and Latham A. J. H. (Eds) 1999. *Pacific Centuries: Pacific and Pacific Rim Economic History since the 16th century*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1957. 'Coinage in East Africa before Portuguese times'. *Numismatic Chronicle*: 151–75.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1959. 'Some problems of East African coinage: from early times to 1890'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 53: 250–60.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1971. 'Coin finds and their significance for East African chronology'. *Numismatic Chronicle*: 283–301.
- Glassman, J. 1995. *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856–1888*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Guillain, C. 1856–7. *Documents sur L'Histoire, La Géographie et le Commerce de l'Afrique Orientale*, Vol. 2. Paris: Arthus Bertrand.
- Guyer, J. 1995. 'Introduction: the currency interface and its dynamics'. In *Money Matters: Instability, Values and Social Payments in the Modern History of West African Communities*, edited by J. Guyer, 1–33. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Guyer, J. 2004. *Marginal Gains, Monetary Transactions in Atlantic Africa*. Chicago: University of

- Chicago Press.
- Hopkins, A. G. 1973. *An Economic History of West Africa*. London: Longman.
- Hore, E. 1892. *Eleven Years in Central Africa*. London: Stanford.
- Horton, M. (Ed.) 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the East Coast of Africa*. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. C. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Krapf, L. 1844. *The Island of Zanzibar or Ongodja*. Church Missionary Society Archive, Birmingham, CA5016.
- Kuroda, A. 2007a. 'What is the complementarity among monies? An introductory note'. *Financial History Review* 15 (1): 7–15.
- Kuroda, A. 2007b. 'The Maria Teresa dollar in the early twentieth-century Red Sea region: a complementary interface between multiple markets'. *Financial History Review* 14 (1): 89–110.
- Machado, P. 2014. *Ocean of Trade: South Asian Merchants, Africa and the Indian Ocean, c. 1750–1850*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Médard, H. 2007. *Le Royaume du Buganda au XIXe Siècle: Mutations Politiques et Religieuses dans un Ancien état d'Afrique*. Paris: Khartala.
- Middleton, J. 1992. *The World of the Swahili: An African Mercantile Civilization*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Middleton, J. 2003. 'Merchants: an essay in historiographical ethnography'. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 9: 509–26.
- Nolan, F. P. 1977. 'Christianity in Unyamwezi 1878–1928'. PhD diss., University of Cambridge.
- Pallaver, K. 2009. "'A recognized currency in beads": glass beads as money in 19th-century East Africa – the central caravan road'. In *Money in Africa*, edited by C. Eagleton, H. Fuller and M. J. Perkins, 20–9. London: British Museum Research Publications.
- Pallaver, K. 2015. 'The African native has no pocket: monetary practices and currency transitions in early colonial Uganda'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 48 (3): 471–99.
- Pallaver, K. 2016. 'From Venice to East Africa: history, uses and meanings of glass beads'. In *Luxury in Global Perspective: Commodities and Practices*, edited by B. S. Grewe and K. Hofmeester, 192–217. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pallaver, K. forthcoming. 'What East Africans got for their ivory and slaves: the nature, working and circulation of commodity currencies in 19th-century East Africa'. In *Currencies of Commerce in the Greater Indian Ocean World*, edited by G. Campbell and S. Serels. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Pankhurst, R. 1963. 'The Maria Theresa thaler in pre-war Ethiopia'. *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 1 (1): 8–26.
- Pawelczak, M. 2010. *The State and the Stateless: The Sultanate of Zanzibar and the East African Mainland – Politics, Economy and Society 1837–1888*. Warszawa: Instytut Historyczny Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.
- Perkins, M. J. 2013. 'The coins of the Swahili coast c. 800–1500'. PhD diss., University of Bristol.
- Perkins, M. J., Fleisher, J. and Wynne-Jones, S. 2014. 'A deposit of Kilwa-type coins from Songo Mnara, Tanzania'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 49 (1): 102–116.
- Prestholdt, J. 2008. *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Reid, R. 2002. *Political Power in Precolonial Buganda: Economy, Society and Warfare in the Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Rockel, S. 2006. *Carriers of Culture: Labor on the Road in Nineteenth-Century East Africa*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Roscoe, J. 1911. *The Baganda: The Native Customs and Beliefs*. London: Macmillan.
- Sheriff, A. 1987. *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar: Integration of an East African Commercial Empire into the World Economy, 1770–1783*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Stanley, H. M. [1872] 2006. *How I Found Livingstone*. Vercelli: White Star.
- Stride, H. G. 1956. 'The Maria Theresa thaler'. *Numismatic Chronicle*, sixth series 16: 339–43.
- Thomas, H. B. 1952. 'The Maria Theresa dollar'. *Uganda Journal* 16: 96–8.
- Tosh, J. 1970. 'The northern interlacustrine region'. In *Pre-colonial African Trade: Essays on Trade in Eastern and Central Africa*, edited by R. Gray and D. Birmingham, 103–18. London: Oxford University Press.
- Walker, J. 1936. 'The history and coinage of the Sultans of Kilwa'. *Numismatic Chronicle*: 43–81.
- Wynne-Jones, S. and Fleisher J. 2012. 'Coins in context: local economy, value and practice on the East African Swahili coast'. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 22: 19–36.
- Wynne-Jones, S. and Fleisher J. 2016. 'Coins and other currencies on the Swahili coast'. In *The Archaeology of Money*, edited by C. Haselgrove and S. Krmnicek, 115–36. Leicester: Leicester University Press.
- Zelizer, V. 1997. *The Social Meaning of Money: Pin Money, Paychecks, Poor Relief, and Other Currencies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

41

GLASS BEADS AND INDIAN OCEAN TRADE

Marilee Wood

Introduction

Glass was first produced c. 2500 bce in Mesopotamia. It is believed that the first objects made from this miraculous new material were beads. Glass is difficult to produce, requiring fairly precise combinations of ingredients and the ability to achieve and maintain high temperatures for extended periods. The technology was slow to spread, possibly because it was a guarded secret. By the first millennium CE, glass that could be related to the present study was being produced in the greater Middle East, North Africa, South and Southeast Asia and China. It was not being made in eastern or southern Africa, so we can assume the glass beads studied here provide evidence of foreign trade. However, because glass can be reworked at temperatures significantly lower than those required for its production, it is possible that a very few beads discussed here could have been locally made from imported glass.

This discussion will focus on glass beads from eastern African archaeological sites beginning with the first millennium CE and continuing to the seventeenth century, when European-made beads began to take over the trade. Although Portuguese explorers/traders entered the Indian Ocean at the end of the fifteenth century, they quickly learned that African consumers were unwilling to accept unfamiliar European-made beads, demanding instead those they were accustomed to, which came mainly from India. Around the mid-seventeenth century, European beads began to displace Indian ones, in large part because European beadmakers had begun to copy the Indian varieties that had been the stock-in-trade for over a millennium.

Although glass beads form a significant percentage of exotic imports found in many archaeological sites under discussion, their value in site interpretation was limited in the past because it was difficult to place them in time or by origin based simply on morphology. Because of this, few archaeologists sieved deposits with mesh small enough

(3 mm or less) to capture more than the larger beads, leading to the impression that glass beads were relatively rare on the coast particularly in the first millennium CE. The potential distortion this could cause in site interpretation is demonstrated at Unguja Ukuu (see below), where 96 per cent of all glass beads recovered measured 4.5 mm or less. In addition, in the past most beads were not examined by specialists, so written descriptions of them are usually not adequate for identification or comparison. Chemical analysis of the glass used to make the beads was rare before the past two decades and in some recent reports, in which chemical analysis has been undertaken (for example, Dussubieux *et al.* 2008), details of bead morphology and the contexts from which the samples were recovered have not been provided.

p.459

Fortunately, in the past few decades, technologies such as laser-ablation inductively-coupled-plasma mass-spectrometry (LA-ICP-MS), X-ray fluorescence (XRF) and Raman spectroscopy have been developed or adapted to study glass chemistry, enabling us to determine regions where the glass was produced. Beads, however, were made by artisans who were often not associated with the glassmakers, so raw glass and cullet (recycled scrap glass) were traded to beadmakers who might reside continents away from the glass manufacturers. Thus chemical analysis can be used to trace origins of the glasses, but to search for locations where the beads were made we must study the morphology and production methods used to make them.

Glass bead studies can now provide diverse insights into interpretation of archaeological sites. They were valuable trade items but, in the periods under discussion, were relatively inexpensive for traders while being highly sought by consumers due to their aesthetic appeal, durability and the fact that they could not be produced locally (apart from the few fashioned from reworked imported glass). In addition, they were not particularly fragile, so easy to transport, sometimes even used as ballast. They were used for decorative purposes (particularly personal adornment), as prayer beads in Islamic cultures, and in barter – with specific beads having locally agreed-upon values. Glass beads can also broaden our understanding of Indian Ocean trade with eastern Africa because most were made in regions different from those that produced exotic ceramics, traditionally used as evidence of foreign trade and its origins.

Next, glass beads from selected sites on the eastern African coast will be discussed and compared, beginning with the earliest identified beads.

Early first millennium CE

At this time there are no glass bead finds in eastern Africa that can be positively identified as predating the seventh century CE. Claims of Roman bead finds at Mkukutu in the

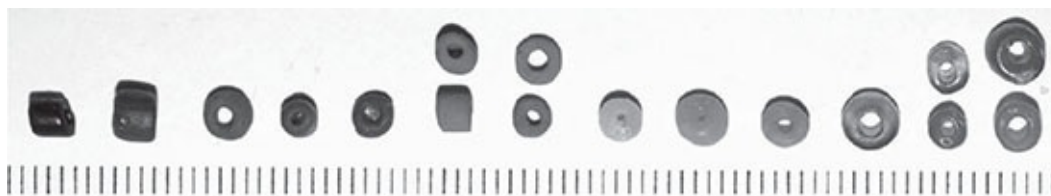
Rufiji Delta (Chami 1999a, 1999b, 2004) are inconclusive, as they refer to types manufactured for over 1,500 years (Wood 2011b: 24–5); chemical analysis that could refine the dates has not thus far been conducted.

Unguja Ukuu, Zanzibar

Juma's (2004) excavations at Unguja Ukuu, in southwest Zanzibar (Map 3, p. xxiv), produced over 400 glass beads. Because they have not been systematically studied or chemically analysed, I discuss here beads from the Sealinks excavations of 2011–2012, which have been carefully examined and chemically analysed. Over 1,500 glass beads were recovered at the site (Wood *et al.* 2016), which served as an important port between about the seventh and tenth centuries CE (Juma, this volume). The most numerous bead type, a high-alumina soda-lime-silica glass fluxed with mineral-soda, is also the most interesting. These small, monochrome drawn beads are often referred to as Indo-Pacific beads (see Francis 2002: 30). They were made of a glass type (m-Na-Al) produced in South (and at times Southeast) Asia from the fifth century bce (Dussubieux *et al.* 2010) up to at least the seventeenth century CE.

The Unguja Ukuu examples ([Figure 41.1](#)) are made of a subtype, referred to as m-Na-Al 1 (*ibid.*), produced between the fifth century bce and the tenth century CE, so represent first-millennium CE trade to the African coast. M-Na-Al 1 glass is known to have been manufactured in Sri Lanka (Dussubieux 2001), although South India could have produced it as well. Based on the contexts of these beads in both the Sealinks' and Juma's excavations, it appears that they were the first glass beads to arrive, making them the earliest securely dated glass beads identified in eastern Africa to date.

p.460

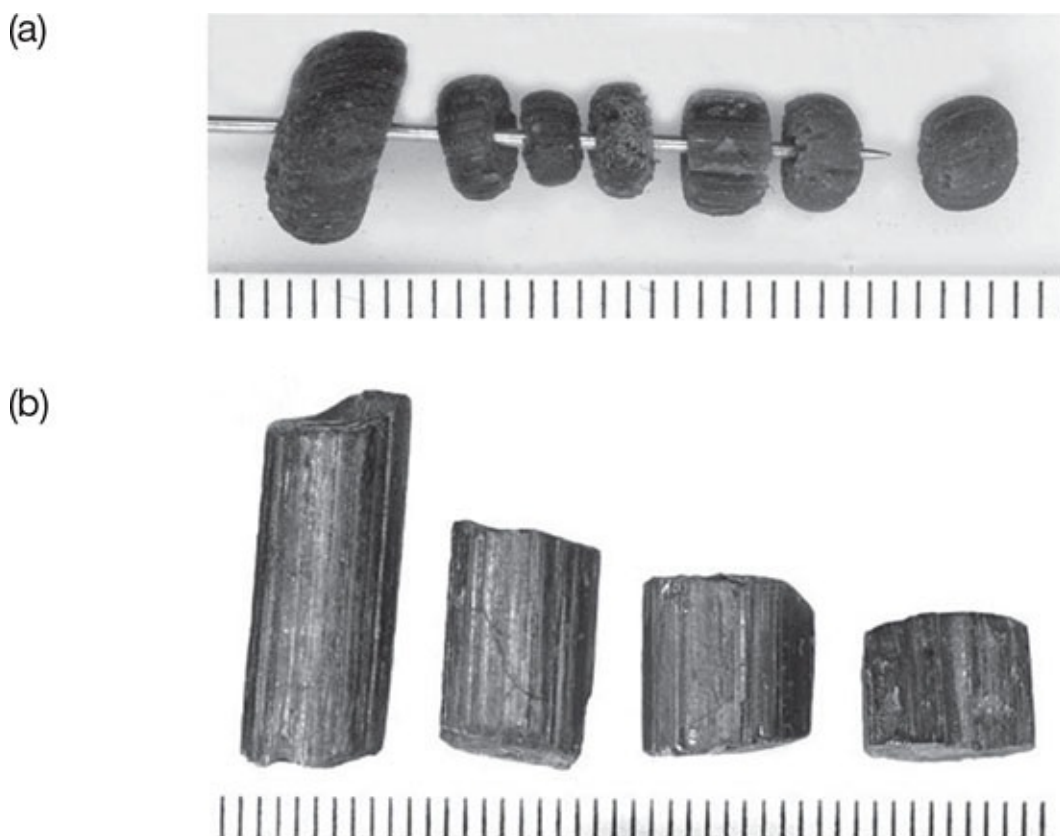


[Figure 41.1](#) M-Na-Al 1 beads from Unguja Ukuu

The second most common glass type found among Unguja Ukuu beads is a plant-ash glass (v-Na-Ca), known to have been made in the Iraq–Iran region beginning in the third century bce (Lankton and Dussubieux 2006: 135, 2013: 431; Lankton *et al.* 2008: 355) and, beginning in the eighth–ninth century CE, in the eastern Mediterranean and Egypt as well (Henderson *et al.* 2004). Although the glass is clearly a Middle Eastern product, most of the Unguja Ukuu beads of this glass type (Figure 41.2a) were probably made elsewhere, based

on morphology and the production methods. This proposition is supported by the knowledge that glass of this type was widely traded in antiquity (Lankton and Dussubieux 2006: 135, 2013: 431), and that the main method by which the Unguja Ukuu beads were produced is not known to have been practised in the Iraq–Iran region. Almost all of these beads were made by chopping drawn-glass tubes into bead-size segments, the same process used in South and Southeast Asia to make Indo-Pacific beads. Thus it appears likely that South or Southeast Asian beadmakers were involved in the production of many of the plant-ash beads. Many of the drawn beads of this glass are, however, finished in a manner different from that used for Indo-Pacific beads. When bead segments are cut from a tube they have sharp and sometimes jagged ends. To smooth or round them, Indo-Pacific beadmakers placed them in a medium such as ash to prevent them sticking together and reheated them while stirring until the glass slumped enough to round the edges. The Unguja Ukuu v-Na-Ca drawn beads, however, were mostly finished by placing the cut segments on a flat surface and reheating them briefly. This resulted in beads that are slightly flat on one end and rounded on the other. It is also significant that none of the Unguja Ukuu v-Na-Ca drawn beads morphologically match those found in southern Africa between the eighth and mid-tenth centuries. Those were made from cut, drawn tubes of the same glass, but their ends were left untreated. They are known as Zhizo series beads (Figure 41.2b) and were the only bead type imported to the southern African interior during that time frame (Wood 2005, 2011a; Robertshaw *et al.* 2010).

p.461



[Figure 41.2](#) (a) Cobalt blue v-Na-Ca beads from Unguja Ukuu (some show evidence of being heat rounded on a flat surface); (b) Zhizo series cobalt blue v-Na-Ca beads from southern Africa (Chibuene, Mozambique)

Thus most of the glass beads recovered from Unguja Ukuu were made either of a South Asian mineral-soda fluxed glass (m-Na-Al 1) – most likely from Sri Lanka – or a plant-ash glass (v-Na-Ca) made in the Middle East, probably in the Persian Gulf region. But, having identified the probable regions where the glass was made, is it possible to identify the areas where the beads themselves were made? Francis (2002, 2013), who studied the beads excavated at the third to tenth century CE site of Mantai in Sri Lanka (Carswell *et al.* 2013), determined that Indo-Pacific beads were being made there. Thus it is possible that the m-Na-Al 1 beads found at Unguja Ukuu came from that important entrepôt, although other sites in the region cannot be ruled out. But what about the beads made of Middle Eastern glass using South Asian technology? One potential source is an archaeological site known as Thung Tuk on the west coast of Thailand, directly across the Bay of Bengal from Mantai. It was an important link in east–west trade, particularly around the ninth century CE (Chaisuwan 2011). Francis (2002) also studied the beads excavated there and found evidence of beadmaking involving various sorts of beads. He recorded that the drawn, chopped, and reheated beads appeared rather square, an apt description of beads reheated on a flat surface like those from Unguja Ukuu. He also suggested that a type of eye bead, which he named the Takua Pa eye bead, may have been made there. Two of the eye beads found at Unguja Ukuu are morphologically similar to the Takua Pa type and LA-ICP-MS analysis of those beads matches results from analysis of several related beads from Thung Tuk (data kindly provided by James Lankton) (Wood *et al.* 2016). In addition, images of Thung Tuk beads kindly provided by the excavator, Boonyarit Chaisuwan, show that a number of other Unguja Ukuu beads uncommon in eastern Africa have counterparts at Thung Tuk, suggesting a possible link between the beads in Thailand and the v-Na-Ca beads at Unguja Ukuu. Most distinctive of the unusual beads common to both sites are folded, intricately patterned mosaic beads; these and other decorated polychrome beads are sometimes referred to as ‘fancy’ beads. They were made by master glassworkers from v-Na-Ca glass and are found at archaeological sites from Iran to Scandinavia, and Thailand to Zanzibar. In Scandinavia they have been dated to between 800 and 850 CE (Callmer 2003), dates that fit comfortably with Unguja Ukuu and Thung Tuk. Their wide distribution, however, makes it probable they were produced in the eastern Mediterranean or Egypt rather than in Thailand.

Thus it is possible that if Unguja Ukuu’s m-Na-Al 1 beads were made at Mantai and if v-Na-Ca beads made in Thailand were transshipped through Mantai, then most of the glass beads found at Unguja Ukuu came from or via Sri Lanka; whether directly or perhaps through the Persian Gulf is not yet known. However, I recently examined the British Museum beads that Whitehouse (Whitehouse and Williamson 1973) excavated at Siraf and, although small drawn Indo-Pacific beads are present, none of the types of v-Na-

Ca beads peculiar to Thung Tuk and Unguja Ukuu are present.

Shanga

Extensive excavations at Shanga in the Lamu Archipelago (Map 2, p. xxiii) (mid-eighth to mid-fourteenth century CE; Horton 1996, Horton, this volume), where deposits were sieved with 5 mm mesh, produced just 33 glass beads from pre-eleventh-century levels. From descriptions provided by Horton, these early beads appear to be quite different from those at Unguja Ukuu. According to Horton (1996: 328) most were wound, with yellow being the most common colour followed by mid blue. In contrast, at Unguja Ukuu, 99 per cent were drawn, with blue-green the most common colour (accounting for 54 per cent), while yellow beads were relatively rare. Also, at Unguja Ukuu most of the wound polychrome beads are eye beads, whereas at Shanga eye beads were not recorded; there, wound beads were mostly decorated with trails of a second color (Horton 1996: 438).

p.462

Turning to beads from deposits dating between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries, Horton noted that glass beads increased in number quite dramatically beginning in about 1050 and peaking in about 1200 (146 beads), after which they gradually declined to the point that only 13 were recovered from phase 20 (*c.* 1375). In total, 543 glass beads were recovered. He also notes that the majority of beads in this timeframe were monochrome, with yellow being the most frequent colour up to about 1250 CE, after which green assumes that position. Unpublished results from LA-ICP-MS analysis of 50 beads from Shanga (P. Robertshaw, personal communication) indicate that v-Na-Ca beads were rare, accounting for only five of the 50 analysed. The remainder were made of m-Na-Al 2 glass from South Asia (which replaced the earlier m-Na-Al 1 glass), including a number of large, wound black bicones with denticulated patterns impressed around the circumference.

Some of the disparities between bead assemblages at Shanga and Unguja Ukuu could result from smaller beads not having been captured in the 5 mm mesh sieves used at Shanga; it appears that only one glass bead smaller than 4 mm was recovered from all time periods (Horton 1996: 325, 438). In contrast, at Unguja Ukuu 71 per cent of all beads recovered measured less than 3.5 mm, and another 25 per cent less than 4.5 mm. Although it is conceivable that smaller beads were absent from Shanga, it is likely that smaller beads were simply not recovered. Of the beads that were chemically analysed, most appear to have come from post-tenth-century India. And, based on morphology, four of the five plant-ash beads appear to be products of the eastern Mediterranean or Egypt, while the last resembles Zhizo beads as found in southern Africa.

Manda

At Manda, also in the Lamu Archipelago (Map 2, p. xxiii) (Kusimba *et al.*, this volume), the beads from Chittick's 1970s excavations (Chittick 1984) were studied by Helen Morrison (1984). Period I (mid-ninth to early eleventh centuries) produced 79 glass beads, of which 55 were drawn and 24 wound. Beginning with the drawn, 33 per cent were blue-green, most measuring between 2.5 and 4.5 mm in diameter. These figures are similar to those from Unguja Ukuu. Both sites (including Juma's record of the earliest levels he excavated at Unguja Ukuu) indicate that small, drawn blue-green beads figure prominently in the earliest levels. Other similarities include the presence of small, drawn pumpkin-orange (Munsell # 7.5YR 5/10) beads at both sites (see [Figure. 41.1](#) slightly left of centre for examples). Up to the present, beads of this colour have not been recorded at any other eastern African site, but they were found in late (fourth to sixth century CE) deposits at Berenike, an Egyptian port on the Red Sea (Francis 2002: 222). Francis (1989: 89, 2002: 222) believed these orange beads were made exclusively in Sri Lanka, particularly at Mantai. They are not found in South Asia after the tenth century. Other glass colours unusual in small drawn beads from early assemblages, but present at both Manda and Unguja Ukuu, include transparent/translucent colourless and opaque pale green. LA-ICP-MS analysis of the Unguja Ukuu beads demonstrates that all of these unusually coloured beads were made from m-Na-Al 1 glass, the type made in Sri Lanka. The morphological similarities suggest that the Manda ones are probably made of m-Na-Al 1 glass like those at Unguja Ukuu. Three dark, cobalt blue drawn beads were also found, one of which Morrison (1984) describes as 'oblate with pinched ends'. It is actually a segmented bead, probably similar to several cobalt blue segmented beads found at Unguja Ukuu, made of v-Na-Ca glass.

p.463

However, the Period I wound beads found at Manda (Morrison 1984: 182, 188) do not appear to be much like the Unguja Ukuu examples, which are mostly eye beads. No eye beads were recorded at Manda, where monochrome, transparent cobalt blue barrel-shaped beads were the most common, accounting for 10 of the 24 wound beads recovered.

Manda excavations in Periods II (mid-eleventh to late-thirteenth century) and III (late-thirteenth to fourteenth century) produced 528 glass beads of which 75 per cent were drawn and the remainder wound. Of the drawn beads 61 per cent are blue-green, 17 per cent yellow, 11 per cent black, and 8 per cent green; no other colour makes up more than 1 per cent. Forty-seven per cent of the wound beads in these periods are bicones. Black is the most common colour accounting for 52 per cent of wound beads while yellow, blue-green and green each make up between 14 per cent and 16 per cent. Of particular interest is a group of black bicones decorated with impressed 'denticulated' patterns at the circumference. As has been mentioned, similar beads were recorded at Shanga but none

were found at Unguja Ukuu, reinforcing the assignment of this type to the second millennium CE.

Manda's early drawn bead assemblage appears to be related to that of Unguja Ukuu, suggesting it, too, was tied to trade from Sri Lanka (or possibly South India) in this period.

Tumbe

Tumbe is a seventh to tenth century site on Pemba Island in Tanzania (Map 3, p. xxiv). Excavations there (LaViolette and Fleisher 2009; Fleisher 2010, this volume) produced a number of glass beads of which I have examined only a few, but they are interesting. Eleven of the beads morphologically match the Zhizo bead series found in southern Africa (Wood 2005, 2011a); LA-ICP-MS analysis of several shows they are made of the same v-Na-Ca glass as the Zhizo series beads (P. Robertshaw, personal communication). This is significant; Zhizo beads were the only type imported into the southern African interior between the eighth and mid-tenth centuries, and Tumbe is the only eastern African coastal site to have produced more than one example. Pemba is widely regarded to have been the site of Qanbalu (Trimingham 1975: 122, 135; Chittick 1977: 192; Hourani 1995: 148; Horton and Middleton 2000: 66), mentioned in several early Arab documents. This includes writings by al-Mas'udi, who visited Qanbalu in 916 CE and reported that ships from Oman and the Persian Gulf sailed directly to Qanbalu where they stopped en route to Sofala (at that time, roughly the entire coast of present-day Mozambique) to trade for ivory, gold and 'many wonderful things' (Freeman-Grenville 1962: 15). Thus, the presence of Zhizo beads at Tumbe (and their near absence at other coastal sites) suggests Tumbe was linked to the trade between the Gulf and southern Africa, reinforcing the supposition that Qanbalu can be identified with Pemba.

Kilwa Kisiwani

Kilwa Kisiwani (Wynne-Jones, this volume) was not very active in Indian Ocean trade in the first millennium CE. Chittick (1974: 485) recorded only eight glass beads from early contexts and few were from well stratified deposits. But Chittick's detailed account of Kilwa's glass beads from the second millennium provide a useful overview of the full sequence of bead occurrence at an east coast site between the tenth and nineteenth centuries (Chittick placed Period II at Kilwa in the late twelfth to late thirteenth centuries, but Chami [1998] reassigned it to the tenth to thirteenth centuries). A total of 17,867 glass beads were recovered from Kilwa but 15,498 of them were recovered from Periods IV and V after European traders and beads had taken over a large part of the trade. It is also important to note that Chittick's excavations were extensive, so perhaps recovery of even

greater numbers of beads would have been expected; as [Table 41.1](#) shows, sizable numbers of small (2.5–4.5 mm) and minute (<2.5 mm) beads were recovered, so small-mesh sieves must have been used at times.

p.464

Chittick suspected many of the beads came from India, but at the time bead studies were undeveloped and the proposal lacked certainty. He did, however, cite early Portuguese accounts of buying beads in India for the Africa trade, such as Lavanha's 1593 account that stated beads were made in India at Nagapatam (now Nagapattinam, on India's southeast coast) and exported to Mozambique (Theal 1898: 303). Recent research including chemical analysis of the glass has demonstrated that, indeed, most of the small drawn monochrome beads from pre-European contexts in eastern Africa came from South Asia (Dussubieux *et al.* 2008: 798; P. Robertshaw, personal communication), as did many wound monochrome beads. The case in southern Africa is, however, somewhat different: between the mid-thirteenth and mid-fifteenth centuries, almost all small, drawn monochrome beads were made of plant-ash glass with high levels of alumina (v-Na-Al) (Robertshaw *et al.* 2010; Wood 2011a), whose origins are still uncertain.

Relevant information about the beads found by period at Kilwa is given in [Table 41.1](#), which displays total bead numbers, how many were wound or drawn and, in some periods, bead diameters. It also notes characteristic or unusual beads that can help identify periods. Unfortunately, Chittick provided size information only sporadically, so it is not possible to see the full picture.

[Table 41.1](#) Kilwa Kisiwani glass beads by period, showing totals of wound and drawn beads and selected size ranges (Chittick 1974: 486–93)

<i>Period (centuries CE)</i>	<i>Total beads</i>	<i>Wound</i>	<i>Drawn</i>	<i>Sizes <2.5 mm minute</i>	<i>2.5–4.5 mm small</i>	<i>4.5–8 mm medium</i>
II 10th–late 13th c.	296	151	145	25%	50%	25%
Characteristic beads: yellow and brownish-red lenticular and cone-lenticular wound beads (also spheroids); wound denticulated black beads as found at Shanga and Manda						
IIIa late 13th–c.1400	998	344	654	28%		
Chinese translucent ruby red high lead beads appear; also translucent cobalt blue spheroids – both rare						
IIIb c. 1400–1500	1069	100	969			50%
Unusual folded beads appear; also greenish yellow drawn beads appear						
IV 16th–17th c.	7753	159	7594			99.5%
Folded beads and greenish yellow continue; drawn orange beads appear for first and only time						
V 18th–19th c.	7745	8	7737			
European beads appear: crackled white tubes (only white drawn beads), a few Indian-red-on-green and a few cobalt blue tubes; sage green is characteristic of period.						

The shift through time from wound to drawn beads evident in the Kilwa assemblage

might reflect a shift in trade patterns. Kanungo (2004: 45, 51) has noted that in India, wound beads are found mainly in archaeological sites in the north, whereas small drawn beads are found in the Deccan and the south. This suggests that, up to about the fourteenth century, much of the bead trade to the eastern Africa came from northern India, after which it gradually shifted to regions further south. But this was the case only in the second millennium; as will be recalled, Indo-Pacific beads at Unguja Ukuu came from the south (probably Sri Lanka) whereas wound beads were rare there and made mostly of Middle Eastern (v-Na-Ca) glass.

p.465

Several observations can be made about temporal parameters of some beads, or about trade connections. Chittick considered brownish-red (often called ‘Indian red’, which can mislead in terms of origins) and yellow lenticular wound beads to be characteristic of Period II. Wound black denticulated beads, as found at Shanga and Manda, came from this period as well. Some of the most interesting beads from Kilwa were found in Period III contexts. They are small, wound beads (sometimes called coil-wound beads) made of translucent ruby-red potash-lead-silicate glass (Wood 2016: 72–3) (see Figure 41.3a), a type made in China starting in about the second century CE (Gan Fuxi 2009) and continuing up to recent times (Burgess and Dussubieux 2008). A hoard of 30 was found in the Husuni Ndogo complex adjacent to Husuni Kubwa palace, and three more from nearby. These beads, which also appear in amber-gold and emerald green colours, are rare, and have been found in small numbers at eastern African sites (see [Table 41.2](#)). All these sites have early fifteenth-century components, which becomes significant because the fleet of the Chinese admiral, Zheng He, reportedly visited the coast in the early fifteenth century (on his 1421–1422 voyage) (Levathes 1994; Dreyer 2007). Because these beads are so rare, and unlike Chinese ceramics they are confined to this short period, it is possible they were gifts from the Chinese fleet.

In Periods IIIb and IV some unusual, large (*c.* 20 mm) biconal beads were found, which Chittick (1974: 466–8) described as folded. Their bodies are drab and grainy – not very glasslike – and decorated with trails of glass in red, yellow and sometimes blue. Such beads are also found at Songo Mnara but have not been recorded elsewhere; international bead specialists I have consulted have never seen them. It is very possible they were made locally by reworking imported glass.

It is generally accepted that Kilwa was the principal entrepôt controlling trade between eastern and southern Africa between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the height of the gold trade from southern Africa. But it is notable that few of the bead types (the Mapungubwe Oblate and Zimbabwe series), found in the hundreds of thousands in southern Africa during this period, were found at Kilwa. Indeed, when Chittick was shown orange beads from Great Zimbabwe, he remarked that he had not seen similar ones on the coast (Chittick 1974: 483). The rarity at Kilwa (and on the entire coast) of bead

types that were a key part of trade to southern Africa calls into question the extent of Kilwa's control over the southern African trade, at least in terms of glass beads.

[*Table 41.2*](#) Archaeological sites with Chinese coil-wound beads

<i>Eastern African site</i>	<i>Number of coil-wound beads</i>
Lamu – north Kenya	1
Manda – north Kenya	4
Shaka – north Kenya	3
Gedi – Kenya	1
Chwaka, Pemba Island – Tanzania	1
Mafia – Tanzania	2
Kaole Village – Tanzania	1
Kilwa Kisiwani – Tanzania	33
Songo Mnara – Tanzania	15
Great Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe	1

p.466

Chittick notes that European beads appear in Period V (eighteenth to nineteenth century), but it would be surprising if they had not arrived in the seventeenth century (see below on Songo Mnara). Large greenish-yellow tubes (of a sort different from earlier ones) accounted for 3,491, almost half of the beads from this period. In my experience these are unknown in India and likely to be European. Drawn, opaque royal blue beads that are nearly spherical, accounted for 2,274; again these were a new type and must be European. Chittick also noted that large tubular white beads with 'horizontal cracks' (typically known as 'crackled whites') were fairly common, and that a few tubular brownish-red-on-a-core of another colour (typically bottle green) were present. These last two types, along with large, cobalt blue tubes, form the typical set of early European beads found in eastern Africa. Large numbers were found in Chami's excavations at Kaole Ruins in association with typical Indo-Pacific beads (Wood 2002). It is important to remember that Indian beads would have continued to be imported at the same time that European (and even Chinese, see below) beads were making an entrance into the African market. All these were being traded by Europeans, but Indian and Arabian traders continued to participate in the trade.

Songo Mnara

Songo Mnara, on the next island south of Kilwa Kisiwani, was a small wealthy stonetown occupied mainly in the fifteenth century (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2010, 2011; Fleisher 2014; Wynne-Jones, this volume). Excavations there in 2009 and 2011 produced 2,562 glass beads that could be compared with Periods IIIb and IV at Kilwa. Similar to Kilwa's

Period IV, at Songo Mnara drawn beads of the Indo-Pacific type accounted for 95 per cent of the assemblage. Wound beads were about 4 per cent and large folded beads of the type found at Kilwa (and possibly locally made) formed the remainder. Of particular interest are the wound potash-lead-silicate Chinese beads. Fifteen coil-wound examples were recovered, 10 ruby red, three amber-coloured, and two emerald green (Figure 41.3a), again not unlike the beads found at Kilwa. However, a second type of bead made of similar glass was found at Songo Mnara in a compound in the northwest corner of the site. These beads are mostly elliptical in shape and, unlike the coil-wound ones, are larger and were built up with layers or winds of glass, then marvered to smooth the wind marks and shape the beads before removal from the mandrel (Figure 41.3b). The same translucent ruby red and emerald green colours, as found in the coil-wound examples, were found, but in addition opaque yellow, pale blue and blue-green occur. Chemical analysis shows that the glasses of these two Chinese bead sets can be separated on the basis of lithium levels and the colorants used to produce the ruby red glass (Wood 2016: 72–3).

We can separate elliptical beads from the coil wound ones temporally as well, because they were found associated with two of the earliest types of European beads in eastern Africa: the large tubular brownish-red-on-green-core and cobalt blue ones, mentioned earlier. This is the only part of the site to produce these two types and, based on the knowledge that brownish-red-on-green-core beads were first produced in *c.* 1600, it is likely this compound was occupied later than other areas excavated. Both bead types were likely traded by Portuguese (or other European) traders, along with beads from India. As has been mentioned, the Portuguese were obliged to buy beads for the Africa trade in India, and these new types represent the beginning of trade in beads from other parts of the world. Chami's (2002) excavations at Kaole Village produced a similar assortment of large tubular European beads mixed with Indo-Pacific types, and some elliptical wound beads that could be Chinese (they have not been chemically analysed) (Wood 2002).



[*Figure 41.3*](#) (a) Ruby red coil-wound Chinese beads from Songo Mnara; (b) Emerald green, ruby red, pale blue and yellow Chinese elliptical beads from Songo Mnara

The Comoros

The Comoros (Wright, this volume) were not heavily engaged in late first-millennium trade that included glass beads (fewer than 20 have been recovered in excavations), although large quantities of exotic ceramics were found (Wright 1984). Descriptions of the beads from ninth to tenth century Dembeni, on Maore, include two small, drawn, opaque black beads that have been reheated, and 16 ‘granular’, minute, drawn blue-grey short tubes, with one end ground flat and the other untreated in most cases (Wright 1984: 47). From the descriptions it is likely that the black beads are South Asian, and the blue-grey (Munsell 2.5PB to 5.0PB 8/1) are probably made of plant-ash glass from Iran/Iraq, given that cobalt blue glass at this time was coming only from that region. A similar blue-grey bead was recorded from M’ro Dewa as well (Chanudet and V  ran 1983).

In eleventh- to fifteenth-century contexts, Wright’s excavations (1992: 105) produced just ten glass beads: one from Sima described as wound, dark, and opaque, and eight from

Domoni including seven small drawn opaque black, and one medium drawn opaque red. These are probably South Asian in origin. Wright reports that most of the beads were found in fine-screen sieving related to flotation operations; other deposits were sieved with 6 mm mesh, which would have been too large to capture most small-sized beads.

Recent excavations headed by Martial Pauly, of a group of eleventh- to thirteenth-century graves at Antsiraka Boira on Mayotte (Maore), have produced many thousands of beads. Analysis of a representative group is ongoing; results should dramatically increase our understanding of bead trade to the Comoros.

p.468

Madagascar

In Madagascar, two excavated sites with late first-millennium CE components have produced glass beads. In the northwest, Phase Ia at Mahilaka (Radimilahy, this volume) produced 157 initially dated to the late-ninth to early-tenth centuries (Radimilahy 1998: 183). Subsequent examination based on morphology and LA-ICP-MS analysis suggests the beads actually post-date the mid-tenth century (Robertshaw *et al.* 2006). In the northeast, the eighth- to twelfth/thirteenth-century site of Sandrakatsy produced 37 large, drawn tubular yellow beads from an undated pit (Wright and Fanony 1992: 32–3). They formed part of a cache that included 17 spherical carnelian beads, two spherical gold beads, and one of silver. It appears likely that this cache dates toward the later end of the site's time span, based partially on the observation that at Mahilaka the association of carnelian beads with glass beads is a Phase II (thirteenth–fifteenth century) phenomenon. This combination is also frequently found in burials at the thirteenth to sixteenth site of Vohemar (Rasoarifetra 2000).

Twenty-nine of the Mahilaka glass beads, which number 1,581 in total, were analysed with LA-ICP-MS (Robertshaw *et al.* 2006), demonstrating that both m-Na-Al 2 (South Asian) glass and high-alumina plant-ash glass (v-Na-Al) were used to make beads. The Indo-Pacific (m-Na-Al 2) beads included types found in southern Africa in the tenth to thirteenth centuries (the K2 Indo-Pacific series), as well as all of the types found in eastern Africa from the tenth century on, including wound m-Na-Al 2 beads. In addition, a few beads of the Mapungubwe Oblate and Zimbabwe series, made of v-Na-Al glass (the only types of beads imported into southern Africa between the mid-thirteenth and mid-fifteenth centuries) were identified in the analysis. Yet, the assemblage as a whole, mainly composed of Indo-Pacific types and including 9 per cent wound beads, is more closely related to bead assemblages on the east coast than southern Africa (Wood 2005: 189–91).

Conclusion

This study of glass beads brought to Africa's east coast, from the earliest securely identified examples to the arrival of European beads in the seventeenth century CE, provides us with new insights into Indian Ocean trade with eastern Africa. Unguja Ukuu, Zanzibar, has produced the earliest securely identified glass beads, dating from between the seventh and tenth centuries CE. Probably the first to arrive, made of a mineral-soda high-alumina glass, came from South Asia, possibly from Mantai, Sri Lanka. They were followed before long by beads made of a plant-ash glass mainly produced in the Iran/Iraq region, but most of the beads were probably manufactured elsewhere, some possibly in Thailand. Thus the early bead trade appears to have come mainly from, or through, southern South Asia.

In the second millennium there was a shift in bead sources. Plant-ash beads declined to very small numbers and were made in the eastern Mediterranean or Egypt, but most beads were made of mineral-soda high-alumina glass from the Indian subcontinent. Early in this period there was a mix of beads – wound from northwest India and drawn from southern India. But over time wound beads decreased in numbers, suggesting a gradual shift in trade patterns favouring the Deccan and southern India. The presence of small numbers of high-lead Chinese beads, scattered along the east coast in the early fifteenth century, may represent gifts from the fleets of the Chinese admiral, Zheng He. Although Europeans arrived in the Indian Ocean at the end of the fifteenth century, Africans did not accept glass beads from Europe until the early seventeenth century, after which they gradually took over the market, displacing the Indo-Pacific beads that had been the core of that trade for at least a millennium.

p.469

The most significant of these changes – those occurring in the second half of the tenth century – related to political upheavals at the time. These included the Chola invasion of Sri Lanka, followed by the abandonment of Mantai and a shift in power in that region to South India. After this, production of m-Na-Al 1 beads apparently ceased, and m-Na-Al 2 beads (wound and drawn) made at various sites in India became the main bead types traded to Africa's eastern seaboard. This is also the period in which the Persian Gulf lost its preeminent position in Indian Ocean commerce, and political power in the Middle East shifted from the Gulf to Fustat (old Cairo), Egypt. Concomitantly v-Na-Ca beads made from drawn tubes, such as Zhizo beads in southern Africa and flat-reheated ones from eastern Africa, vanished from trade (although 'fancy' beads made of a variation of this glass type, mostly produced in the eastern Mediterranean or Egypt, continued to be traded to eastern Africa in small numbers).

In this same transition period, around the mid- to late tenth century, a number of important trading ports on the eastern African coast were essentially abandoned, including Unguja Ukuu, Tumbe and Chibuene. After this transition, glass beads from South Asia

appeared for the first time in southern Africa (all earlier beads were v-Na-Ca drawn beads from the Gulf region). From then up to the arrival of European beads in the seventeenth century, India was the main source of glass beads found in east Africa while in southern Africa the source alternated between India and the unknown region that produced Mapungubwe Oblate and Zimbabwe series beads.

References

- Burgess, L. and Dussubieux, L. 2008. 'Chemical composition of late eighteenth and nineteenth century glass beads from North America: clues to sourcing beads'. *Beads* 19: 58–73.
- Callmer, J. 2003. 'Beads in Scandinavia in the early and high medieval periods, ca. AD 400–1200'. In *Ornaments from the Past: Bead Studies after Beck*, edited by I. Glover, H. Hughes-Brock and J. Henderson, 38–46. London: Bead Study Trust.
- Carswell, J., Deraniyagala, S. and Graham, A. 2013. *Mantai: City by the Sea*. Aichwald: Linden Soft Verlag.
- Chaisuwan, B. 2011. 'Early contacts between India and the Andaman coast in Thailand from the second century bce to eleventh century CE'. In *Early Interactions between South and Southeast Asia: Reflections on Cross-Cultural Exchange*, edited by P. Y. Manguin, A. Mani and G. Wade, 83–112. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing.
- Chami, F. A. 1998. 'A review of Swahili archaeology'. *African Archaeological Review* 15 (3): 199–218.
- Chami, F. 1999a. 'The Early Iron Age on Mafia and its relationship with the mainland'. *Azania* 34: 1–10.
- Chami, F. 1999b. 'Roman beads from the Rufiji Delta, Tanzania: first incontrovertible archaeological link with the *Periplus*'. *Current Anthropology* 40: 237–42.
- Chami, F. 2002. 'The excavations of Kaole Ruins'. In *Southern Africa and the Swahili World*, edited by F. Chami and G. Pwiti, 21–37. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press Ltd.
- Chami, F. 2004. 'The Egypto-Graeco-Romans and Panchaea/Azania: sailing in the Erythraean Sea'. In *Red Sea: Trade and Travel*, edited by P. Lunde and A. Porter, 93–104. Oxford: BAR International Series.
- Chanudet, C. and V éran, P. P. 1983. 'Une reconnaissance archaéologique de Mohéli'. *Etudes Océan Indien* 2: 41–58.
- Chittick, H. N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*. Nairobi and London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Chittick, H. N. 1977. 'The East Coast, Madagascar and the Indian Ocean'. In *The Cambridge History of Africa*, edited by J. D. Fage and R. Oliver, 183–232. Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press.

Chittick, H. N. 1984. *Manda: Excavations at an Island Port on the Kenyan Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.

p.470

Dreyer, E. 2007. *Zheng He: China and the Oceans in the Early Ming Dynasty, 1403–1433*. New York: Pearson/Longman.

Dussubieux, L. 2001. 'L'Apport de l'ablation laser couplée à l'ICP-MS à l'étude du verre archéologique de l'Océan Indien'. PhD diss., Université d'Orléans.

Dussubieux, L., Kusimba, C. M., Gogte, V., Kusimba, S. B., Gratuze, B. and Oka, R. 2008. 'The trading of ancient glass beads: new analytical data from South Asian and East African soda-alumina glass beads'. *Archaeometry* 50: 797–821.

Dussubieux, L., Gratuze, B. and Blet-Lemarquand, M. 2010. 'Mineral soda alumina glass: occurrence and meaning'. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 37: 1646–55.

Fleisher, J. 2010. 'Swahili synoecism: rural settlements and town formation on the central East African coast, AD 750–1500'. *Journal of Field Archaeology* 35: 265–82.

Fleisher, J. 2014. 'The complexity of public space at the Swahili town of Songo Mnara, Tanzania'. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 35: 1–22.

Francis, P. Jr. 1989. 'Mantai: bead crossroads of the medieval world'. *Ornament* 12: 83–91.

Francis, P. Jr. 2002. *Asia's Maritime Bead Trade: 300 bc to the Present*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Francis, P. Jr. 2013. 'The beads'. In *Mantai: A City by the Sea*, edited by J. Carswell, S. Deraniyagala and A. Graham, 349–69. Aichwald: Linden Soft Verlag.

Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1962. *The East African Coast: Selected Documents from the First to the Early 19th Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Gan, F. 2009. 'Origin and evolution of ancient Chinese glass'. In *Ancient Glass Research along the Silk Road*, edited by G. Gan, R. H. Brill and S. Tian, 1–40. Singapore: World Scientific.

Henderson, J., McLoughlin, S. D. and McPhail, D. S. 2004. 'Radical changes in Islamic glass technology: evidence for conservatism and experimentation with new glass recipes from Early and Middle Islamic Raqqa, Syria'. *Archaeometry* 46: 439–68.

Horton, M. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.

Horton, M. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Hourani, G. F. 1995. *Arab Seafaring*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Juma, A. 2004. *Unguja Ukuu on Zanzibar: An Archaeological Study of Early Urbanism*. Uppsala: Department of Archaeology and Ancient History.

Kanungo, A. K. 2004. 'A database of glass and glass beads in India'. *Man and Environment*

- Lankton, J. and Dussubieux, L. 2006. 'Early glass in the Asian maritime trade: a review and an interpretation of compositional analyses'. *Journal of Glass Studies* 48: 121–44.
- Lankton, J. and Dussubieux, L. 2013. 'Early glass in Southeast Asia'. In *Modern Methods for Analysing Archaeological and Historical Glass*, edited by K. Janssens. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
- Lankton, J., Dussubieux, L. and Rehren, T. 2008. 'A study of mid-first millennium CE Southeast Asian specialized glass beadmaking traditions'. In *Interpreting Southeast Asia's Past: Monument, Image and Text*, edited by E. Bacus, I. Glover and P. Sharrock, 335–56. Singapore: NUS Press.
- LaViolette, A. and Fleisher, J. 2009. 'The urban history of a rural place: Swahili archaeology on Pemba Island, Tanzania, 700–1500 AD'. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 42: 433–55.
- Levathes, L. 1994. *When China Ruled the Seas*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Morrison, H. 1984. 'The beads'. In *Manda: Excavations at an Island Port on the Kenyan Coast*, edited by H. N. Chittick, 181–9. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Radimilahy, C. 1998. *Mahilaka: An Archaeological Investigation of an Early Town in Northwestern Madagascar*. Uppsala: Department of Archaeology and Ancient History.
- Rasoarifetra, B. N. 2000. 'Contribution à l'étude des perles des sites archéologiques du deuxième millénaire AD Nord de Madagascar'. MA thesis, Université d'Antananarivo.
- Robertshaw, P., Rasoarifetra, B., Wood, M., Melchiorre, E., Popelka-Filcoff, R. and Glascock, M. 2006. 'Chemical analysis of glass beads from Madagascar'. *Journal of African Archaeology* 4: 91–109.
- Robertshaw, P., Wood, M., Melchiorre, E., Popelka-Filcoff, R. S. and Glascock, M. D. 2010. 'Southern African glass beads: chemistry, glass sources and patterns of trade'. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 37: 1898–1912.
- Theal, G. M. 1898. *Records of South-Eastern Africa, Vol II*. Cape Town: Government of the Cape Colony.
- Trimingham, J. S. 1975. 'The Arab geographers and the East African coast'. In *East Africa and the Orient: Cultural Syntheses in Pre-colonial Times*, edited by H. N. Chittick and R. I. Rotberg, 115–46. New York: Africana Publishing Company.
- Whitehouse, D. and Williamson, A. 1973. 'Sasanian maritime trade'. *Iran* 11: 29–49.
- Wood, M. 2002. 'The glass beads of Kaole'. In *Southern Africa and the Swahili World*, edited by F. Chami, G. Pwiti and C. Radimilahy, 50–65. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press.
- Wood, M. 2005. 'Glass beads and pre-European trade in the Shashe-Limpopo region'. MA

- thesis, University of the Witwatersrand.
- Wood, M. 2011a. 'A glass bead sequence for southern Africa from the 8th to the 16th century AD'. *Journal of African Archaeology* 9: 67–84.
- Wood, M. 2011b. 'Interconnections: glass beads and trade in southern and eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean – 7th to 16th centuries AD'. Uppsala: Department of Archaeology and Ancient History.
- Wood, M. 2016. 'Glass beads from pre-European contact sub-Saharan Africa: Peter Francis's work revisited and updated'. *Archaeological Research in Asia* 6: 65–80.
- Wood, M., Panighello, S., Orsega, E. G., Robertshaw, P., Van Elteren, J., Crowther, A., *et al.* 2016. 'Zanzibar and Indian Ocean trade in the first millennium CE: the glass bead evidence'. *Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences*, doi:10.1007/s12520-015-0310-z.
- Wright, H. T. 1984. 'Early seafarers of the Comoro Islands: the Dembeni Phase of the IXth–Xth centuries AD'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 19: 13–59.
- Wright, H. T. 1992. 'Nzwani and the Comoros, XIth–XVth centuries'. *Azania* 27: 81–128.
- Wright, H. T. and Fanony, F. 1992. 'L'évolution des systèmes d'occupation des sols dans la vallée de la Rivière Mananara au nord-est de Madagascar'. *Taloha* 11: 16–64.
- Wynne-Jones, S. and Fleisher, J. 2010. 'Archaeological investigations at Songo Mnara, Tanzania, 2009'. *Nyame Akuma* 73: 2–8.
- Wynne-Jones, S. and Fleisher, J. 2011. 'Archaeological investigations at Songo Mnara, Tanzania, 2011'. *Nyame Akuma* 76: 3–8.

42

QUANTITATIVE EVIDENCE FOR EARLY LONG-DISTANCE EXCHANGE IN EASTERN AFRICA

The consumption volume of ceramic imports

Seth M. N. Priestman

Ceramics represent both one of the most widely recognised and earliest identified sources of evidence for long-distance exchange contacts between eastern Africa and the wider Indian Ocean world. As such, ceramics hold a crucial place within the discussion surrounding the emergence of Swahili culture during the later first millennium CE. One aspect of the ceramic evidence that has received limited attention is the overall volume of ceramic exchange and how this may have varied between sites or developed through time. These considerations are likely to have a significant bearing on the interpretation of the Swahili origins debate. The recent adoption of ceramic quantification methods makes it possible to compare datasets from multiple sites along the eastern African littoral for the first time, and to set the information from these sites within the broader context of the western Indian Ocean as a whole.

The importance of ceramics can be explained in terms of the high relative frequency of ceramic finds compared with most other categories, coupled with the recognisable nature of imports within the region. At the same time, it is important not to confuse the archaeological value of ceramics with their relative economic importance in ancient times, which in most cases, is likely to have been minimal. What we are looking at is the discarded wrappers and containers left behind – a faint imprint of a wider set of significant but now largely invisible structuring processes of exchange and consumption that form the real target of our investigation.

During the course of archaeological fieldwork in Zanzibar in the 1960s, Neville Chittick (1966: 161) appears to have been the first to identify the source and date of fragments of bright turquoise-green glazed pottery lying on the surface of the site of

Unguja Ukuu ([Figure 42.1](#)). In identifying the Middle Eastern origin of these pieces and their chronology within the Early Islamic tradition, the Unguja Ukuu finds took on special importance in providing direct archaeological evidence for early long-distance exchange between eastern Africa and the Middle East. The finds also marked the site as a place of particular regional importance.

p.473



[Figure 42.1](#) Fragments of appliqué-decorated, turquoise-blue alkaline glazed ware jars manufactured in southern Iraq and exported widely across the Indian Ocean

Subsequently, ceramic imports have continued to be used as a key marker of the special status of particular sites (Fleisher 2010: 142). A recent study of the broader regional settlement pattern on Pemba Island brings into sharp relief the differences between relatively small and frequent village-scale settlements scattered across the countryside, which lack significant quantities of ceramic imports, and the far larger settlement of Tumbe, with its suite of ceramics derived from varied Indian Ocean sources (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013: 1154). Although there is likely to be some regional variation, and further investigation is warranted, it appears generally that there is a direct correlation between long-distance exchange practices and processes of social and economic intensification, particularly associated with the development of larger coastal settlements. This goes to the heart of a central debate in Swahili archaeology: when did the distinctive, coastally oriented Swahili society first emerge, who were the agents of this process, and what were the primary drivers of this development? Ceramics are a major source of evidence available, with the potential to refine and enrich our understanding of these issues.

Standard definitions and measures

While the significance of ceramics as an evidence source has been acknowledged, the full impact of ceramics on the Swahili origins debate has been held back by two methodological limitations: the inability to provide a standard definition of the same varieties of ceramic imports that occur repeatedly in different regions, and the slow adoption of quantitative finds recording. Both are prerequisites for the systematic comparison of assemblages through time and space. The problem of providing a standard definition and measure of ceramic finds is not, of course, unique to Swahili archaeology. Yet these issues are particularly accentuated in a field in which the sources of such imports are removed, both geographically and, in a deeper sense, by longstanding institutional structures that have compartmentalised archaeological studies in different Indian Ocean regions (Pearson 2006: 354). Such demarcations are reflected in ceramic studies, where there has been limited direct crossover of individual specialists working, for example, in the Middle East and Africa.

p.474

A solution to the first problem is emerging from the methodology adopted in a series of interlinked ceramic studies undertaken on Persian Gulf assemblages (Kennet 2004; Priestman 2005a, 2013; Power 2015). The traditional structure of ceramic publication for assemblages in eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean area at large, for example in *Manda* (Chittick 1984), has been to offer generic groupings of imports set within a narrative overview of their occurrence through the excavation's main areas or phases. While certain categories can be readily recognised within the scheme presented, terminology often varies between reports. This hinders the process of systematic cross-assemblage comparison. A subtle but nonetheless important innovation has been the adoption of a structured class-based classification system (Kennet 2004). This involves efforts to standardise the definition of recognisable ceramic class categories by assigning a single class code and name, and placing all descriptive information into a uniform format within a standalone class catalogue (Orton *et al.* 1993: 67–86). Such a system stems from the requirements – and in some cases constraints – of computerised data entry. What it delivers is a clear and often more detailed cross reference system and a reliable means for recording the occurrence of related groups of ceramic material across an entire excavation sequence: the ability to provide systematic intra- and inter-assemblage comparison and analysis.

I adopted a similar model to that first deployed in the publication of Kush (Kennet 2004) while studying the assemblages from Andrew Williamson's surface survey of southern Iran (Priestman 2005a), the finds from Siraf in the British Museum (Priestman forthcoming). Other authors have taken up the approach, working on assemblages from Sanjan on the west coast of India (Nanji 2011), and the predominantly Late Islamic sequence from Al-

Ain in the United Arab Emirates (Power 2015). While not removing the underlying need for refinement of ceramic categories, this system offers a structured format within which the refinement process can occur. A further attempt to integrate the information currently available on the definition of class categories in widespread circulation within the Indian Ocean area has been undertaken as part of a broader study of long-term patterns of ceramic exchange during the Sasanian and Early Islamic periods (Priestman 2013). The categorisation offered in this study serves as a framework within which to compare ceramic imports in assemblages along the eastern African coast.

The issue of finds quantification is closely linked to the above issues. Computerised recording favours information standardisation and metrics. There has been a relatively slow and sporadic adoption of the methodology of finds quantification in Indian Ocean archaeology for a variety of reasons (Priestman 2013: 110–17), with profound results. For example, most of the discussion surrounding long-distance ceramic exchange relates simply to issues of date, provenance and occurrence. The tools have not been available to consider the relative importance of different sources of ceramics, how the composition of imported ceramic assemblages may have changed through time and, perhaps most fundamentally, what the relative volume, and by extension the relative economic importance, of ceramic exchange may have been at any given time. With this information, it is possible to open up a new evidence base with the potential to transform our understanding of the long-term economic history of the region.

Quantified assemblages in East Africa

p.475

Table 42.1 Coastal East African sites with quantified ceramic assemblages

<i>Site</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Main occupation date</i>	<i>Quantified sherds</i>	<i>Excavation date</i>
Manda	Lamu, Kenya	18 ha	Mid-8th to 15th C	c. 250 000	1970, 1978
Shanga	Lamu, Kenya	15 ha	Mid-8th to 15th C	135,836	1980–1987
				(Trench 6–10)	
Tumbe	Pemba, Tanzania	20–30 ha	7th to mid-10th C	c. 65,000	2002–2006
Unguja Ukuu	Unguja, Tanzania	17.2 ha	8th to 10th C	33,240	2011–2012
				(Trench UU14)	

While the importance of ceramic finds quantification has been applied in some areas routinely since the 1970s (Crummy and Terry 1979), it is new to the region in question. In an analysis of available data for the Indian Ocean region published over a decade ago (Kennet 2004), it was possible to compare information from just two sites: Kush in the

United Arab Emirates and Shanga in Kenya (Horton 1996a). Since then, quantitative recording is now becoming more widely adopted and is now approaching a point of critical mass in terms of a range of datasets available. Here I provide an exploration of the subject based on re-analysis of existing datasets or the provision of new and partially published data ([Table 42.1](#)), from four early settlements in eastern Africa (Map 1, p. xxii). This is not an entirely arbitrary sample; seen from a regional perspective, the sites are unusual in containing a relatively high concentration of imports, being situated directly on the coast and attaining a larger overall scale than neighbouring settlements less involved in long-distance exchange.

Manda

Manda is located on Manda Island in the Lamu Archipelago, Kenya (Kusimba *et al.*, this volume). Excavations that produced the dataset analysed were undertaken in 1970 and 1978 (Chittick 1984: xv, 22). Trenches were opened in at least 30 different areas with a significant focus on horizontal architectural exposure, though in select locations key stratigraphic relationships were examined through deeper soundings. The report provides a partial breakdown by period (Chittick 1984: 225) of the total number of imported sherds amalgamated from across the site and representing the earliest presentation of basic ceramic quantification on the coast. The figures are not ideal: they do not consider imported ceramics as a proportion of all ceramic finds; they do not present the total sherd yields for individual excavations, strata or phases; and they sub-divide the assemblage into only 27 generic categories to cover the *c.* mid-eighth to fifteenth centuries. Fortunately, elsewhere within the report is a rough estimate of the total number of sherds from across the excavations – more than 250,000 sherds, local and imported (Chittick 1984: 65) – making it possible to consider the imported ceramic finds as a proportion of the whole assemblage. I undertook a re-study of the majority of the imported pottery (Priestman 2010), which provided quantitative data on a wider range of imported categories, together with figures not previously available for the relative proportions of different vessel types. Time constraints made it impossible to record individual sherd find-spot details; the new data can be analysed at the level of the whole assemblage and not by stratigraphic phase (Priestman 2013).

Shanga

Shanga is situated around 20 km sailing to the north of Manda on Pate island, also within the Lamu Archipelago (Horton, this volume). Excavations were conducted over six seasons between 1980 and 1987. Publication in the 1990s effectively marks the beginning of modern quantitative ceramic finds recording in Indian Ocean archaeology. In addition to a wider coring survey, the excavation methodology involved digging larger 20 × 20 m trenches in the central area of the settlement (Horton 1996a: 10, 79). Finds were recorded by stratigraphic context and contexts were grouped together by phase. Local and imported

ceramics were separated from one another during trench-side processing. Imported ceramics were sorted into groups and presented as a phased seriation, with figures given based on sherd counts for the two main areas of excavation: Trench 1 and Trenches 6–10 (Horton 1996a: 13, tables 13–14).

p.476

Tumbe

Following the initial discovery of Tumbe in 1993, a large seventh–tenth-century settlement on Pemba Island, a detailed investigation was undertaken between 2002 and 2006 (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013: 1154; Fleisher, this volume). It sits on a bluff adjacent to Micheweni Bay and is almost entirely buried below a thick accumulation of later sediments. A test pit survey determined the settlement limits, an area of 20–30 hectares. In total, seventeen 2×2 m trenches and six 1×1 m trenches were opened together with four larger architectural exposures. The full analysis and publication of the finds is still in process but some preliminary details of the quantified ceramic finds assemblage have already been provided (Flexner *et al.* 2008; LaViolette and Fleisher 2009; Fleisher and LaViolette 2013). In total the excavations have produced over 62,000 fragments of local pottery together with over 3,000 fragments of ceramic imports (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013: 1156–7, tables 1–2). The results provide new and important insights into the distribution of imported ceramic vessels at the household level. Overall, significant emphasis has been placed on the assertion that ‘Tumbe is . . . notable for its density of imported goods relative to contemporary Swahili coastal sites’ (LaViolette and Fleisher 2009: 441). This assessment has, however, so far been considered only from the perspective of differences in the total number of imported ceramic finds from individual sites. Such differences are clearly linked in major part to variation in the relative sizes of excavations and finds assemblages, and to differences in finds retrieval methodologies.

Unguja Ukuu

Unguja Ukuu is situated on the southwest coast of Unguja Island in the Zanzibar Archipelago (Juma, this volume). Previous investigations identified the remains of a substantial settlement consisting primarily of wattle-and-daub structures over an area of more than 17 ha (Juma 1996, 2004: 153). These excavations produced over 13,000 ceramic finds but insufficient published information on quantification made further analysis impossible. New information has been provided by Oxford University’s Sealinks Project, which undertook six soundings in different parts of the site in 2011 and 2012 (Horton *et al.* forthcoming)¹. The excavations cover relatively small areas (up to a maximum of 3×3 m) but involved the use of detailed stratigraphic recording and the application of intensive recovery techniques such as sieving and flotation. The excavations were also targeted at areas most likely to produce stratigraphy spanning the occupation sequence. Excavations

that provided the deepest, clearly stratified deposits, and free from modern disturbance, provided radiocarbon samples taken from ‘young’ material such as charred seeds (Crowther *et al.* 2015: 376).

The volume of ceramic exchange

The new quantified ceramic finds data emerging from a number of eastern African sites have the potential to provide important information on spatial and diachronic variation in the volume of long-distance ceramic exchange. Also, the new assemblage data provide the potential to look further at issues such as the specific imports represented, how the mix of these may have changed through time, and dating the earliest finds. Here, I put aside such questions to assess the volume of ceramic imports represented.

p.477

For our purposes the volume of ceramic imports can be measured as a relative proportion of the whole assemblage: the ratio of imported to locally produced ceramics measured according to fragment count (cf. Orton 1993). The assumption made here is that each assemblage contains a similar repertoire of ceramics subject to similar patterns of breakage and discard within a settlement context, such that the measure of brokenness should be generally equivalent between sites. These assumptions can be further tested where required. Full details of the study on which this synthesis is based can be found elsewhere (Priestman 2013; Horton *et al.* forthcoming).

Two levels of interpretative synthesis need to be made. As discussed above, the first is to attempt to standardise the definitions of ceramic categories and record them according to the same classificatory framework. For Manda and Unguja Ukuu this information has been recorded directly from the assemblages themselves (Priestman 2010; Horton *et al.* forthcoming). For Shanga, class categories have been established from the publication (Horton 1996a) and in some cases amended during a review of the archived assemblage (Priestman 2010). The finds from Tumbe have been interpreted solely on the basis of the preliminary published information (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013: 1157; [Table 42.2](#)).

The second interpretive process relates to site chronology. A period spanning several centuries (*c.* seventh–eighth to thirteenth century) has been sub-divided into smaller units on the basis of changes in the occurrence of certain common categories of ceramic imports that are represented in most assemblages in the western Indian Ocean area. These same markers can be used to establish a correlation between occupation phases within each site sequence and a particular ceramic period, *i.e.* phases of contemporaneity between sites. The important thing to recognise is that the ceramic periodisation is based on the documented occurrence of specific categories of ceramics and is unlikely to be significantly altered on the basis of new information or changing interpretation. Secondary

to this process is the attempt to assign absolute dates. Rough date brackets are provided, supported by an accumulating body of evidence drawn from coin finds, ceramic presence/absence associations and, increasingly, radiocarbon determinations and other forms of absolute dating. This seems more likely to undergo further revision and refinement, though even here the margin for error is diminishing. The analysis presented below is based on the following correlations: for Shanga Tr 6–10 *c.* 750–825 = Period 1; *c.* 825–900 = Periods 2–5; *c.* 900–1025 = Period 6–7; *c.* 1025–1250 = Period 8–14. For Unguja Ukuu UU14 *c.* 750–825 = Phase II–VI; *c.* 825–900 = Phase VII–IX (other assemblages are non-differentiated).

As noted, this is the first time it has been possible to directly compare the volume of ceramic imports from several large coastal settlements measured as a proportion of all ceramic finds (Table and [Chart 42.2](#)). Already, certain significant elements are clear. Across all assemblages, ceramic imports derived from long-distance exchange only ever accounted for a small proportion of the ceramics in use. This is consistent with the pattern encountered in all other areas of the western Indian Ocean (Priestman 2013). This is significant because it challenges the general assumption that Indian Ocean exchange occurred frequently and in large volumes, and constituted a substantial source of revenue for state structures (see, for example, Chaudhuri 1985: 203–04; Wink 2002: 35; Kearny 2004: 58–68; Stargardt 2014: 38). One of the major problems in the previous discussions of Indian Ocean trade has been the absence of empirical data, gauging changes in volume and scale, and potential economic value of maritime trade (Chaudhuri 1985: 204; Beaujard 2005: 416, n. 11).

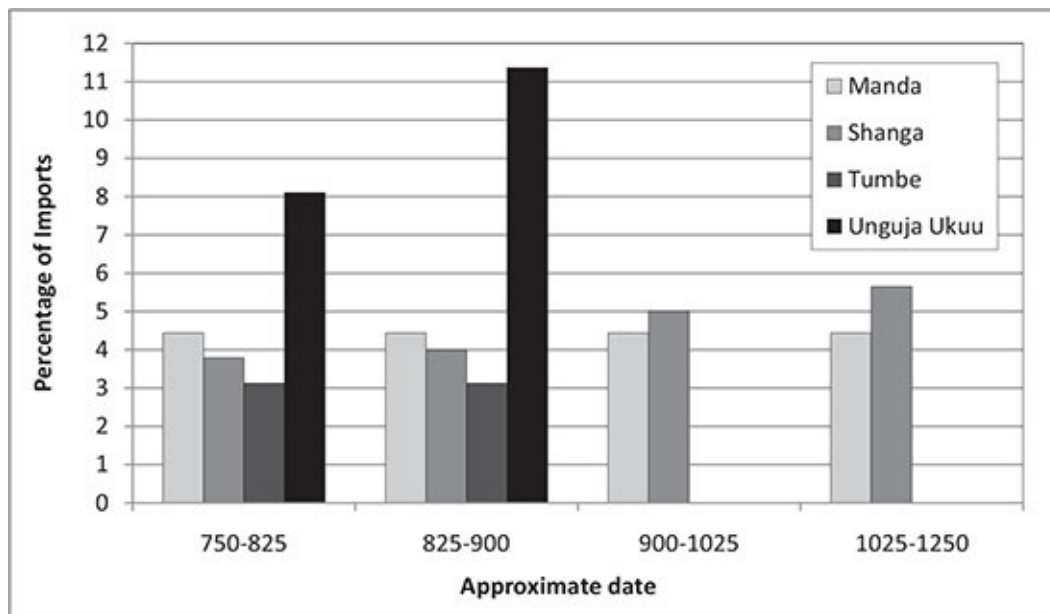
The emerging body of quantitative ceramic data does not necessarily contradict the idea that long-distance exchange contacts brought about substantial socio-economic transformation. What they do indicate is that one of the most abundant archaeological markers of this activity is represented at a low but persistent level within the domestic assemblages of particular coastal settlements. At the same time there are differences in the ratio of local to imported ceramics between these sites and this is of major value in assessing site status and function.

p.478

[Table and chart Table 42.2](#) Sherd count data from coastal settlements in eastern Africa showing proportions of local to imported ceramics by period

Site	Unit	Source	750–825	825–900	900–1025	1025–1250
Manda	Whole site, not phased	Imported	11101			
		Local	238899			
Shanga	Tr 6–10	Imported	54	498	117	2788
		Local	1371	11972	2217	46545
Tumbe	Whole site, not phased	Imported	2000			
		Local	62000			
Unguja	UU14	Imported	1474	1413		
Ukuu		Local	16721	11025		

Data sources include: Manda = figures recorded from the NMK store in Lamu (Priestman 2010); Shanga = fully published excavation data (Horton 1996a: tables 9 and 14); Tumbe = preliminary publication (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013: 1156–57); Unguja Ukuu = Sealinks Project excavations (Horton *et al.* forthcoming).



Evidence from Tumbe makes an important contribution towards our understanding of the consumption of ceramic imports at an individual household level. There is little evidence for substantial size-differentiation of house structures across the settlement, and even modest housing units contain the full array of imported ceramics (LaViolette and Fleisher 2009: 442). This non-structured, decentralised pattern of distribution of imported ceramic vessels within the settlement seems compatible with the wider archaeological distribution of imported material on other large coastal sites in eastern Africa. At the same time, while imported ceramics do not dominate any of the assemblages analysed, the widespread distribution and persistence of particular standardised categories of ceramic imports seems consistent with a semi-industrial scale model of production for many of the common ceramics that achieved widespread distribution within the western Indian Ocean.

A characteristic common to all four of the quantified assemblages is that they appear to have been founded at a similar date, within a period defined in ceramic terms by the presence of characteristic Middle Eastern ceramic imports such as appliqué-decorated turquoise glazed ware and eggshell ware, but the significant absence of ninth-century opaque glazed wares and other elements of the ‘Samarra horizon’ (Priestman 2011). Small quantities of East Asian imports are also represented from the earliest levels at most sites, namely Changsha ware ([Figure 42.2](#)) and southern Chinese green glazed ware or ‘Dusun’ jars ([Figure 42.3](#)). This pre-ninth century phase is particularly clearly represented in the sequence at Unguja Ukuu. Here the earliest occupation levels founded on natural beach sand contain imports dated between the later seventh to later eighth centuries. An excavation undertaken by the Sealinks Project at Fukuchani on Unguja shows it to have been founded even earlier in the sixth or seventh century (Horton *et al.* forthcoming). Here again we see ceramic imports of Middle Eastern origin from the earliest deposits, though the overall volume of material is lower than that recorded from the other sites (2.3 per cent of the ceramic assemblage are imports from the pre-eighth-century occupation phase). Significantly Fukuchani has not produced East Asian ceramic imports, perhaps pointing to an initial phase of exchange limited to the western Indian Ocean, primarily between eastern Africa and the Middle East.

The other aspect to consider is the comparison between sites in terms of the volume of ceramic imports. Among the four assemblages considered, three provide results striking in their general uniformity ([Table 42.2](#)). The proportion of ceramic imports from Manda, Shanga and Tumbe lie within a relatively narrow range of fluctuation, 3.1–5.7 per cent. The phased seriation from Shanga allows us to see that there is some transformation within this period, with the proportion of ceramic imports climbing by minor increments throughout the occupation. Without conducting more detailed re-analysis of the ceramic finds from Manda, it is not possible to provide further chronological differentiation of the sequence and therefore one cannot currently determine whether the long-term trajectory of development is the same.

Turning to the remaining sequence from Unguja Ukuu, there is variation in the concentration of ceramic imports encountered across different parts of the site and investigations, for reasons noted above. Elsewhere there is generally a relatively close agreement of figures between the results of the 1985 excavation (Horton and Clark 1985: 169) and those undertaken in 2011–12, and this adds further credibility to the results of both investigations. Among the individual sequences obtained so far, those associated with the excavation of UU14 provide the largest volume of ceramic finds and thus offer the strongest basis for an analysis of the composition of the assemblage within a contiguous sequence. The results obtained are striking: Unguja Ukuu contains a far higher proportion of ceramic imports than any other site in eastern Africa recorded so far ([Table 42.2](#)). Greater detail emerges when one breaks down the figures by excavation phase ([Figure](#)

[42.4](#)).



[Figure 42.2](#) Fragments of Changsha Ware (CHANG) manufactured in Hunan province in southern China and exported across the Indian Ocean region during the eighth to tenth centuries

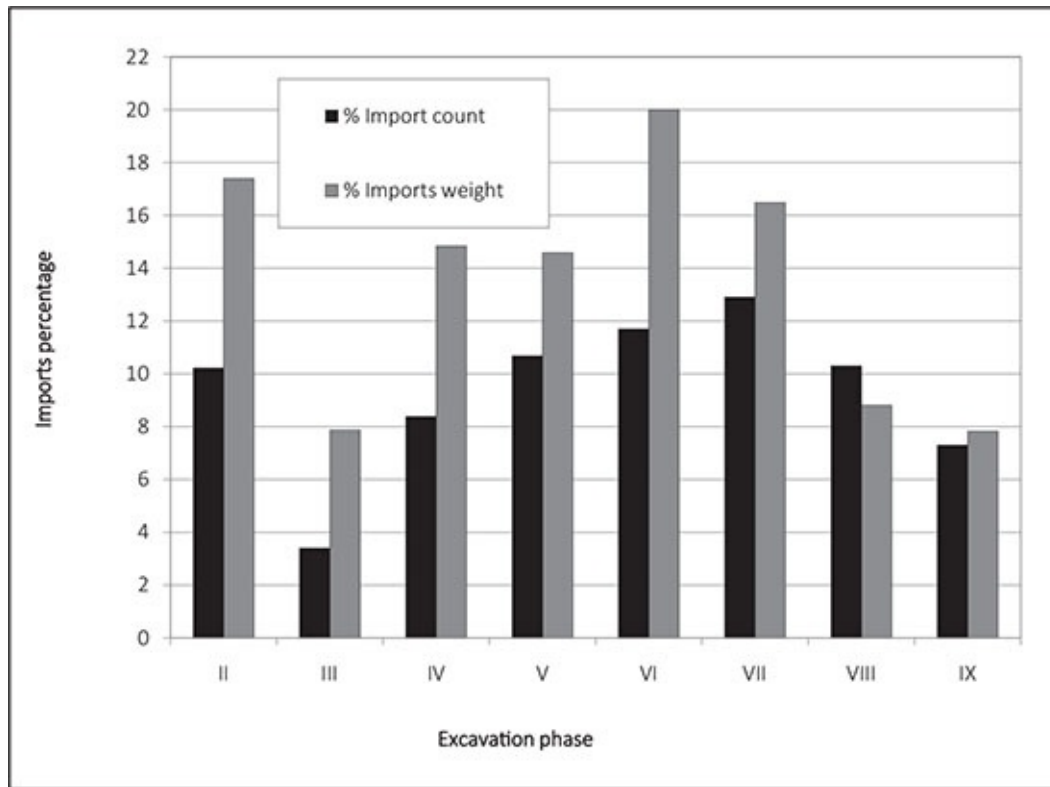
p.480



[Figure 42.3](#) Fragments of 'Dusun' vessels (DUSUN) manufactured in Fujian and

neighbouring provinces in South China, widely exported across the Indian Ocean as transport storage containers between the eighth and the tenth centuries

p.481



[Figure 42.4](#) Figures showing the changing proportion of ceramic imports by count and weight, by excavation phase within the UU14 sequence at Unguja Ukuu

The evidence provided by the UU14 sequence indicates that, even from the earliest occupation, ceramic imports account for a relatively high proportion of the whole assemblage ([Figure 42.4](#)). It is not clear if the low blip in Phase III is significant. What is evident is the longer trajectory, with a growth in concentration of ceramic imports to a high of nearly 13 per cent in Phase VII, which other finds indicate should date to the early to mid-ninth century. One could potentially question whether this high proportion of imports in UU14 relates in some way to the intensive recovery techniques deployed at this site. In fact, if one were to predict the effects of sieving on the sample, it might be to reduce the ratio of imported to local ceramics as the distinctive character and bright colours associated with the former make them a greater target for recovery within a hand-picked sample. In the case of UU14 it is possible to further test the validity of results by comparing figures derived from sherd counts with those recorded for aggregate sherd weight ([Figure 42.4](#)). The latter should counteract any potential for inflation of the count caused by the recovery of small fragments. What we find is that by sherd weight, the

imported material constitutes an even higher proportion of the assemblage, but that in general the two sets of figures track one another closely through the sequence. Overall the volume of ceramics imports at Unguja Ukuu is clearly exceptional both in an eastern African context, and within the western Indian Ocean as a whole. No other reliably recorded sequence within the western Indian Ocean has produced such a high proportion of ceramic imports (Priestman 2013). One can include within this comparison figures from the prominent trade emporium of Siraf in the Persian Gulf, where 5.8 per cent of the assemblage is ceramics derived from beyond the Persian Gulf (Priestman 2013: [table 6.4](#)); in the ninth-century occupation, products of long-distance exchange account for less than half those represented at Unguja Ukuu.

Revival of some older ideas

What are the interaction processes behind these numbers? The variation indicates the underlying differences between settlements, or changes through time in relation to the regularity of exchange contacts, the general availability of imported products and the manner in which such products were absorbed by the communities in which they were received. Ceramic finds data act as a proxy: a high-bulk, low-value item that establishes a baseline for a wider set of activities.

As more detailed chronological information becomes available, on the dating, variety and volume of the earliest ceramic imports into eastern Africa, several important features are becoming more apparent. Unlike coastal settlements engaged in long-distance exchange documented in South Asia, such sites in eastern Africa do not appear to have substantial occupation horizons pre-dating the arrival of this material (Tomber 2008: 134–5, 142). There may also be some level of correlation between settlement size and presence of imports. On Pemba, Tumbe appears to maintain a village-like structure but achieve a significantly greater scale than contemporary settlements (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013: 1166). Unguja Ukuu may also have reached its maximum extent of around 17 ha early on (Juma 2004: 152). What implication might one draw from this? There has rightly been a reaction to push back against certain crude interpretations of the genesis of Swahili society as something necessarily imposed from the outside (Horton 1986, 1996b), or associated with fully fledged forms of urbanism – the direct precursor of stone towns (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013: 1153) – but perhaps it is time to shift the balance back slightly. The causal association between the genesis of long-distance exchange and processes of social intensification and population agglomeration should not necessarily be denied. Nor should the significant influence of a newly galvanised Islamic empire in the Middle East and the demand this created for valuable commodities available in eastern Africa. The chronology for these transformations will no doubt continue to be revised. What is already clear is that despite efforts to identify evidence for the early origins of such developments within a pre-Islamic context (Horton 1996b: 440) – and thereby break the association with Islamic

influence emanating from the Middle East – dependable sources of dating consistently push site chronologies forward. Many of the earliest large coastal settlements appear to have been founded at a similar time, well within the Islamic period in the eighth century.

p.482

What is perhaps most surprising about the results here, particularly those from Unguja Ukuu, is the scale of activity established in such a short time. The proportion of ceramic finds derived from long-distance exchange can perhaps only be explained in terms of frequent, formalised interaction processes indicative of a commercial economic model (Feinman and Garraty 2010: 171). This runs counter to the recent tendency to downplay commercial conceptions of ‘trade’ as the principal source of interaction, in favour of other forms of exchange and dispersal, such as gift exchange, down-the-line object transfer or the random loss of personal possessions (Smith 2004: 83; Lambourn 2014: 20–1; see also Fleisher 2010: 147–8). It is clearly important to broaden the debate and consider alternative means by which objects circulated within the Indian Ocean. At the same time, the quantitative data emerging from sites within the region make it possible to calibrate this understanding and appreciate that Unguja Ukuu really is an exceptional site. The role of Unguja Ukuu can perhaps best be understood as a primary gateway for a more formalised exchange process, the major alignment of which, as far as is reflected in the ceramic assemblage, was focused on the Persian Gulf, and within that area the heartlands of the emerging Islamic caliphate in southern Iraq or southwest Iran. Most of the ceramic imports within the earliest dated assemblages from eastern Africa originate within this specific area of the Persian Gulf, a pattern that then changes during the ninth century with the growing importance of more southern ports, especially Siraf (Priestman 2005b; Horton *et al.* forthcoming). The presence of Chinese imports, also from the earliest occupation phase at sites such as Unguja Ukuu, indicate that the growth of Swahili culture was connected not only with an increasing level of participation in long-distance exchange, but in an expansion in the overall scale of the interaction sphere within the Indian Ocean. The network of exchange contacts that linked eastern Africa to the wider Indian Ocean world brought about profound transformations within the region, and ceramic finds data provide a rare means of measuring one of the direct corollaries of this process.

Note

- ¹ The ceramic sequence described here was obtained from Oxford University’s Sealinks Project funded by the European Research Council (Agreement No. 206148) and directed by Nicole Boivin. I have undertaken a detailed analysis of the ceramic assemblage in collaboration with Mark Horton, Alison Crowther and Nicole Boivin, with results in preparation for publication. I am extremely grateful to the wider team responsible for the production of the information from Unguja Ukuu and to the authors above for permission to include some of the results in advance of final publication.

References

- Beaujard, P. 2005. 'The Indian Ocean in Eurasian and African world-systems before the sixteenth century'. *Journal of World History* 16 (4): 411–65.
- Chaudhuri, K.-N. 1985. *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam*. New Delhi: Munishiram Manoharlal.
- Chittick, H. N. 1966. 'Unguja Ukuu: the earliest imported pottery and an Abbasid Dinar'. *Azania* 1: 161–3.
- Chittick, H. N. 1984. *Manda: Excavations at an Island Port on the Kenyan Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Crowther, A., Veall, M.-A., Boivin, N., Horton, M., Kotarba-Morley, A., Fuller, D. Q., et al. 2015. 'Use of Zanzibar copal (*Hymenaea verrucosa* Gaertn.) as incense at Unguja Ukuu, Tanzania in the 7th–8th century CE: chemical insights into trade and Indian Ocean interactions'. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 53: 374–90.
- Crummy, P. and Terry, R. 1979. 'Seriation problems in urban archaeology'. In *Pottery and the Archaeologist*, edited by M. Millett, 49–60. London: Institute of Archaeology Occasional Publication, 4.
- Feinman, G. M. and Garraty, C. P. 2010. 'Preindustrial markets and marketing: archaeological perspectives'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 39: 167–91.
- Fleisher, J. 2010. 'Housing the market: Swahili merchants and regional marketing on the East African coast, seventh to sixteenth centuries AD'. In *Archaeological Approaches to Market Exchange in Ancient Societies*, edited by C. P. Garraty and B. L. Stark, 141–59. Boulder: University of Colorado.
- Fleisher, J. and LaViolette, A. 2013. 'The early Swahili trade village of Tumbe, Pemba Island, Tanzania, AD 600–950'. *Antiquity* 87: 1151–68.
- Flexner, J. L., Fleisher, J. B. and LaViolette, A. 2008. 'Bead grinders and early Swahili household economy: analysis of an assemblage from Tumbe, Pemba Island, Tanzania, 7th–10th centuries AD'. *Journal of African Archaeology* 6 (2): 161–81.
- Horton, M. C. 1986. 'Asiatic colonization of the East African coast: the Manda evidence'. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2: 201–13.
- Horton, M. C. 1996a. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. Nairobi: Memoirs of the British Institute in Eastern Africa, 14.
- Horton, M. C. 1996b. 'Early maritime trade and settlement along the coasts of eastern Africa'. In *The Indian Ocean in Antiquity*, edited by J. Reade, 439–59. London: Kegan Paul.
- Horton, M., Priestman, S., Boivin, N. and Crowther, A. forthcoming. *Local and Imported*

- Ceramics from Fucuchani and Unguja Ukuu: A Quantitative Analysis of Early Swahili Assemblages on the East African Coast*. British Archaeological Reports. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Juma, A. 1996. 'The Swahili and the Mediterranean worlds: pottery of the late Roman period from Zanzibar'. *Antiquity* 70: 148–54.
- Juma, A. 2004. *Unguja Ukuu on Zanzibar: An Archaeological Study of Early Urbanism*. Uppsala: Studies in Global Archaeology, 3.
- Kearney, M. 2004. *The Indian Ocean in World History*. London: Routledge.
- Kennet, D. 2004. *Sasanian and Islamic Pottery from Ras al-Khaimah: Classification Chronology and Analysis of Trade in the Western Indian Ocean*. British Archaeological Reports International Series, 1248/ Society for Arabian Studies Monographs, 1. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Lambourn, E. 2014. 'Borrowed words in an ocean of objects: Geniza sources and new cultural histories of the Indian Ocean'. In *Irreverent History Essays for M. G. S. Narayanan*, edited by K. Veluthat and D. R. Donald, Jr., Ch. 12. Delphi: Primus Books.
- LaViolette, A. and Fleisher, J. 2009. 'The urban history of a rural place: Swahili archaeology on Pemba Island, Tanzania, 700–1500 AD'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 42 (3): 433–55.
- Nanji, R. 2011. *Mariners and Merchants: A Study of the Ceramics from Sanjan (Gujarat)*. British Archaeological Reports International Series, S2231/Sanjan Reports, 1. Archaeopress: Oxford.
- Orton, C. R. 1993. 'How many pots make five? An historical review of pottery quantification'. *Archaeometry* 35 (2): 169–84.
- Orton, C., Tyers, P. and Vince, A. 1993. *Pottery in Archaeology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pearson, N. 2006. 'Littoral society: the concept and the problem'. *Journal of World History* 17 (4): 353–73.
- Power, T. 2015. 'A first ceramic chronology for the late Islamic Arabian Gulf'. *Journal of Islamic Archaeology* 2 (1): 1–33.
- Priestman, S. M. N. 2005a. *Settlement and Ceramics in Southern Iran: An Analysis of the Sasanian and Islamic Periods in the Williamson Collection*. MA thesis, Durham University.
- Priestman, S. M. N. 2005b. 'The rise of Siraf: long-term development of trade emporia within the Persian Gulf'. In *Proceedings of the International Congress of Siraf Port, November 14–16, 2005, Bushehr*, 137–56. Bushehr: Bushehr Branch of Iranology Foundation and Bushehr University of Medical Sciences.
- Priestman, S. M. N. 2010. *Inventory of Imported Pottery from Manda House at the National Museum of Kenya Office in Lamu*, unpublished report. Lamu: National Museums of Kenya.
- Priestman, S. M. N. 2011. 'Opaque glazed wares: definition, dating and distribution of a

- key Iraqi ceramic export in the Abbasid period'. *Iran* 49: 89–114.
- Priestman, S. M. N. 2013. 'A quantitative archaeological analysis of ceramic exchange in the Persian Gulf and western Indian Ocean, AD c.400–1275'. PhD diss., University of Southampton.
- Priestman, S. M. N. forthcoming. *Siraf: Excavated Finds in the British Museum*. British Institute of Persian Studies Archaeological Monograph Series. Oxford: Oxbow.
- Smith, M. E. 2004. 'The archaeology of ancient state economies'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33: 73–102.
- Stargardt, J. 2014. 'Indian Ocean trade in the ninth and tenth centuries: demand, distance, and profit'. *South Asian Studies* 30 (1): 35–55.
- Tomber, R. 2008. *Indo-Roman Trade: From Pots to Pepper*. London: Duckworth.
- Wink, A. 2002. *Al-Hind: The Making of the Indo-Islamic World. Early Medieval India and the Expansion of Islam, 7th–11th Centuries*, Vol. 1. Brill: Leiden.

Swahili architecture

43

ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE OF THE SWAHILI COAST

Mark Horton

In 1966 Peter Garlake published his monumental *Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast*, a survey of surviving architecture in Tanzania, Kenya and Somalia, and collaboration with the excavations at Kilwa, which were being conducted by the British Institute in East Africa under Neville Chittick (1974). For the first time, plans of the Islamic monuments (although not tombs) were accurately drawn up, as well as elevations of the buildings and mihrabs within the mosques. The work at Kilwa also involved architectural study of the late thirteenth-century Husuni Kubwa complex. Garlake was working in an archaeological vacuum, with few available dates, limited excavation data (Kirkman 1954, 1963), and an historical interpretation of the Swahili as the products of Arab ‘colonisation’ from the Middle East (Garlake 1966, 1; Horton and Chami this volume). His study remains invaluable as a record of many buildings that have subsequently disappeared, while new discoveries can suggest a longer and more detailed chronology.

Since 1966 there have been few architectural studies (Fischer 1984), sometimes concentrating on single buildings (Inzerillo 1980) or sites (Wright 1992; Pradines 2009). An important exception is the survey undertaken by Wilson (1978, 1980) along the Kenya coast, and his important study of Swahili tombs (1979b). Domestic architecture was better served by studies of the Lamu Swahili house (Ghaidan 1976; Allen 1979; Donley-Reid 1982), and its function and social context.

It is now accepted that Swahili Islamic architecture is indigenous in character, expressing forms derived from local materials – timber (mangrove poles and hardwoods), fossil and reef coral, thatch and a ready availability of lime and plaster. This differs from earlier views that it was simply a poor copy of Middle Eastern architecture, where local architects little understood the principles of architecture and had only a vague idea of what they were trying to achieve (Garlake 1966: 116–7). Swahili architecture needs to be taken

seriously as a genuine expression of African monumental architecture and a reflection of the complex urban societies in which it formed an integral part.

Early mosques and burials

The first archaeological evidence for the adoption of Islam by coastal communities dates to the eighth century CE. It is from this period that we have found the earliest Islamic buildings made of timber, as well as burials laid out in the correct Muslim fashion. At Shanga (Horton 1996, 2004), a succession of early timber mosques were excavated below two successive stone mosques of the tenth and eleventh centuries CE. Muslim burials (oriented east–west, and laid out on their right sides facing Mecca) reflected and followed the correction of the *qibla* direction observed in the mosques; these shifted some 40 degrees between the eighth and eleventh centuries. At Ras Mkumbuu another timber mosque was found below two tenth-century stone mosques, suggesting a replacement in stone as the community grew in size (LaViolette, this volume).

p.488

Two other sites on the Comoros seem to have had timber predecessors (Wright 1992). At Old Sima, the earliest stone building – below the present (ruined) mosque – dated to the eleventh century or earlier, while below this were found post holes of unknown date. At Domoni, Mkiri wa Shirazi, a site occupied from the eleventh century, a complex sequence of rebuilds was encountered, of between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries. Below the earliest wall a single large post-hole was found of unknown date.

In the tenth century, these prototype timber mosques were converted to stone. Almost universally, *Porites* coral was used. Several of these stone mosques were also raised up on sand platforms, so that their floors were at least one metre above the surrounding ground. They would have been approached via steps, and seem to have had multiple doorways on their east and west walls, as well as on the south wall. Narrow southern rooms may have been for women to attend prayer.

Early mosques at Shanga and Ras Mkumbuu were both made from *Porites* coral, with blocks carefully shaped for the walls, bonded in lime mortar and with raised floors. At Unguja Ukuu a large rectangular building was uncovered in the 1990s overlooking a creek behind the site (Juma 2004). The large undivided space would suggest a mosque, dating to the ninth or tenth century.

An early mosque was also found at Kilwa below the floor of the surviving northern mosque that dates to the twelfth century. Only a small number of trenches were placed below the floor, but part of the southern wall from the first mosque was found, complete with two thresholds – one was probably axial, suggesting originally three doorways.

Internal floors were raised on a bed of sand. The dating evidence for this mosque is not fully documented in the published report (Chittick 1974: 34–5) but attributed to ‘Period II’, which we would now date from the eleventh century. Locally-minted coins of Ali b. al-Hasan were, however, found in the wall makeup, including one of the miniscule examples of the tenth or very early eleventh century. Elsewhere on the site, a small piece of carved stone with angular, probably Arabic, script was found in a pre-eleventh century level, indicating the likely presence of Muslims (Chittick 1974: 131).

These early mosques in the Swahili world differ from mosque architecture in the central Islamic lands where courtyard mosques are widely found. East African mosques are rectangular prayer halls that range in proportion from 2:1 to 3:2, and occasionally square, praying areas. All the mosques are hall-like structures, and it seems that the form, created for timber mosques made of earth-fast upright timbers, was translated into stone buildings. Where ‘Swahili style’ early mosques have been found in the Middle East at Siraf and Sharma, they may have been built to serve the resident African Muslim population that seems to be indicated from finds of East African ceramics at these sites (Whitehouse 1984; Creswell and Allen 1989: 414; Rouguelle 2015: 125).

The ‘Shirazi’ mosque

These early mosques have been found at sites that clearly operated as trading communities, with significant quantities of imported pottery in associated levels. Between the eighth and tenth centuries this trade seems to have been concentrated at a few locations along the coast – the Lamu Archipelago, Zanzibar and Pemba, Comoros and probably the Kilwa Archipelago, so it is unsurprising that it is here that the earliest mosques are to be found. However, during the eleventh century, Islam seems to have spread out of these centres into newly founded communities along the entire coast that may not have been so centrally involved in maritime trade. At the same time, the urban centres themselves were either abandoned (such as Unguja Ukuu and Tumbe; Fleisher and LaViolette 2013) or reformed as at Shanga, Kilwa and Ras Mkumbuu. New centres emerged such as Kisimani Mafia, Mombasa (Sassoon 1980) and Malindi.

p.489

These changes seem to be marked in the historical record as the ‘Shirazi’ migrations. One of the most persistent traditions in East Africa is the arrival of seven brothers – or a father and his six sons – from the Persian city of Shiraz, who founded seven towns between the Lamu Archipelago and the Comoros (Horton and Middleton 2000). The Shirazi traditions are strong on Zanzibar and Pemba, Mafia, Kilwa and in the Comoros, and it is best to view them as a cultural process rather than a literal ‘migration’. This process dates most probably to the period when Shiraz was experiencing a golden age

under the Buyids (945–1055). Features of this ‘Shirazi’ culture include the use of coinage (silver and copper coins), but also a standard form of mosque. Historically we can deduce a strong court ceremonial, under a traditional African ruler and his appointed advisors, conducted within an Islamic medium.

At Shanga the Friday Mosque, dating to around 1000, seems to span this transition, with features both from the earlier mosque tradition (for example, a southern room) and the new style with its four internal pillars. Side pilasters that ended in pillars to support a thatched roof were probably a deliberate throw-back to the ancient timber mosques (at Takwa this technique survived into the sixteenth century; Kirkman 1957; Wilson 1979a). The southern room was abandoned after a fire in the mosque around 1050 and verandas were added on the sides. The building was now a large rectangular prayer hall with a flat ceiling supported on six columns.

Along both the Kenyan and Tanzanian coast, this form of mosque appeared during the eleventh and early twelfth century. They feature a rectangular prayer hall, built of *Porites* coral, with four or six columns (sometimes in stone, but more often in timber), side doorways, often arched with apex nicks, and side and corner pilasters that may still have supported a thatched roof. As before, they were often raised above the ground on sand platforms, with plaster floors. One of the best preserved of these Shirazi mosques is that at Kizimkazi (Zanzibar) with its mihrab and inscription dating to 500/1107 ([Figure 43.1](#); Flury 1922). It has a free standing rectangular prayer hall, side doorways and a raised floor (Chittick 1962; Horton in press). Other examples include Kaole, Mtambwe Mkuu, three mosques at Kisimani Mafia (Chittick 1966), Mbui, Sanje ya Kati (Pradines 2009), Domoni and Old Sima (Wright 1992). The most impressive was Kilwa Kisiwani, a major Shirazi centre, with a rebuilt late-eleventh-century prayer hall, supported on nine wooden columns (Chittick 1974).



[Figure 43.1](#) Kizimkazi inscription (Zanzibar National Archives)

Later developments

This basic form of mosque became fairly universal over the next few centuries – and indeed continued until the nineteenth century – with a number of small modifications. Essentially, this is a rectangular prayer hall to which additions accumulated. By the thirteenth century, the side and corner pilasters (and thus the thatched roof) were abandoned, and *Porites* coral replaced with the easier coral rag and lime construction, although *Porites* was still retained for quoins and door openings. Additional rooms were added to the free-standing prayer hall to expand the prayer areas, as well as formal ablution facilities that seem not to have been present in the earliest mosques. These normally comprised a tank, in the base of which were set glazed bowls, served by a conduit from the well. Coral heads (or sometimes sandstone blocks) were set into the floor to act as foot rubbers.

Prayer halls also expanded in size to accommodate larger Muslim populations, but retained their proportions of 2:1 or 3:2. An exceptionally fine example of this later mosque is the thirteenth-century Tumbatu Friday Mosque, with elegant arched doorways, side aisles and southern ablution area, but still using wooden columns ([Figure 43.2](#)). The new Friday mosque at Ras Mkumbuu was an exception, being nearly square and without side rooms (Kirkman 1959a; Horton in press). Of these later mosques only Kisimani Mafia III had a southern room presumably for female prayer.

The main disadvantages of this mosque plan were the restricted floor space and obstructed view of the mihrab because of the excessive number of columns required to support the roof. One solution was to lengthen the prayer hall to proportions of 2:1 (for example, Muqdishu Jamia, Munghia, Ungwana, Mnarani and Tongoni), but these mosques often include a central line of columns. The designers of mosques faced a problem of how to fit a growing Muslim population into mosques designed for only a few worshippers.



[*Figure 43.2*](#) Friday mosque, Tumbatu

p.491

At Kilwa, by the fourteenth century the largest urban settlement on the coast, the solution was to construct a massive extension to the south of the original mosque (Chittick 1974; Wynne-Jones, this volume). This tripled the available praying area, although the original mihrab was retained in the old mosque and would have been barely visible. The extension was vaulted and included an area reserved for the sultan in the southeast corner, under his own private dome spanning some 4 m, and under which Sultan al-Hasan b. Sulaiman – who ruled when Ibn Battuta visited Kilwa in 1331/2 – said his prayers. It remains one of the most spectacular pieces of Swahili architecture and even the Portuguese favorably compared it to the Great Mosque at Cordoba (Freeman-Grenville 1962: 108).

Another approach, at Kilwa and other sites, was to build multiple mosques across the urban landscape. Up until the late thirteenth century most settlements had a single mosque that served the whole community, as well as multiple functions. Sites now developed several mosques – Shanga, Chwaka, Tumbatu added two more, Kilwa at least three, Songo Mnara four as well as the Friday Mosque. These mosques were considerably smaller and may have had a variety of special functions, as family or community mosques, as cemetery mosques, or specifically for the use of women. As in modern Swahili settlements, these community mosques were used for the daily prayer, while the Friday mosque was reserved for the Friday prayer and sermon. Village mosques were also built away from the main towns, and these were probably used for both Friday and daily prayer. Remarkably, these new mosques, in both town and country, still used the basic dimensions of the Shirazi mosque well into the nineteenth century. A nineteenth-century development was the transverse arcade, supported on internal pilasters, which in the smaller mosques such as at Kua resulted in the return to a square prayer hall.

Vaulting

There is one important exception to this pattern of a single evolution of the freestanding prayer hall: the mosque of Fakhr ad Din in Mogadishu (dated by inscription to 1272 CE; Freeman-Grenville and Martin 1973; Inzerillo 1980). This is a unique building in which the external walls enclose a single coherent area where all the functions of the mosque can be performed – prayer, open courtyard, ablutions and side rooms. It stands quite alone in another respect, as the first building on the coast to use a vaulted roof, and it seems likely that this mosque – uniquely on the coast – was designed with the contemporary architecture of the Islamic world in mind. Shortly afterwards, vaulting was also used at Kilwa Kisiwani, first at the palace of Husuni Kubwa and then for the extension to the Great Mosque, dating to c. 1300 CE. International connections are further suggested by the presence of reused Khambhat carved marble found both at Mogadishu and Kilwa (Lambourn 2004).

Contemporary mosques were built with vaults, both at Kilwa and nearby settlements. These mosques (Kilwa Small Domed and Jangwani mosque, Sanje ya Majoma) use both domes and barrels, often together in the same building. Barrel and domed vaults have bowl insets, some with surviving glazed pottery. The grander domestic structures both at Kilwa and Songo Mnara also used vaults built during this period. Two very unusual mosques again at Kilwa and Songo Mnara have a triple barrel vault across a single aisle with (exceptionally) a northern room; these are specialised mosques, at Kilwa within a grand house, and at Songo Mnara associated with a cemetery.

Seven other vaulted mosques are known, all dating to the mid-fifteenth century. Examples include two mosques at Chwaka ([Figure 43.3](#)), Mwana (Wilding 1975), Ungwana (Kirkman 1966), Miyaadi, Tiwi, Kongo, Jumba la Mtwana and Mwana. The evidence thus suggests that vaulting was used for a short period on the coast, perhaps influenced by the revival of the technique during the rebuilding of the Kilwa mosque. The use of vaulting spread to tomb architecture at around the same time, where it continued to be used on a much more modest scale for the next two hundred years.



[Figure 43.3](#) Chwaka mosque

Mihrabs

The principal decorative feature of coastal mosques is the mihrab (Sw. *kibla*), a decorative apse that marks the direction of prayer towards Mecca ([Figure 43.4](#)). They are found in the north wall of the prayer hall, occasionally in side rooms and courtyards. A typology of mihrabs was proposed by Garlake (1966: 59–75), in the hope that they could provide a useful chronological indicator. He recognised two basic traditions: the ‘classic’ and the ‘mannerist’; the latter belonged only to the nineteenth century. While these types remain useful descriptions, archaeological dating and new discoveries have shown that these differences are due to religious and cultural factors, rather than evolution. Contemporary mosques in the same settlement will often have plain and elaborate mihrabs, as for example at Chwaka, Shanga and Kilwa.

The mihrab was not an essential feature of early mosques, and the direction of prayer might be marked by a spear or a simple niche (Cresswell and Allen 1989). The early timber mosques of the coast have no visible mihrabs, and in the earliest stone mosques the apse was set entirely within the thickness of the wall. Most examples have been lost in later modification, but there are examples at the early mosque at Chwaka, at Kaole, Sanje ya Kati and at Tumbatu in a side aisle. These mihrabs may be associated with early Ibadi communities who were certainly present on the coast; the tradition was revived in nineteenth-century Ibadi mosques on Zanzibar and Pemba (Horton 2013).

A second group of early mihrabs relate to the remarkable mihrab at Kizimkazi dated by

inscription to ah500/1107 CE. It was once thought that only the inscription was original, but careful examination of the fabric, and the discovery of a very similar medieval example at Tumbatu, prove that it is intact. The mihrab has a trefoliate arch, as well as the use of twisted columns and arcading within the apse recess. The lettering employed is of the highest quality floriated and foliated plaited Kufic styles, and is paralleled in inscriptions at Siraf and Bhadresvar. As the carving on both inscription and mihrab uses local *Porites* coral the workmanship was local, and one of the most exceptional pieces of early African Islamic art.



[*Figure 43.4*](#) Mihrab of the mosque at Manda

Aspects of the design seen at Kizimkazi can be seen elsewhere: Tumbatu used floriate Kufic and a trefoil arch; the fluted or arcaded apse is found in the mosques at Kisimani Mafia, Kilwa and Mnarani (with extensive inscriptions). From the sixteenth century trefoliate mihrabs became more common, with examples at Ndumi, Malindi (Jemadari mosque) and Mgao Mwanyia. In the Lamu area there is a distinctive group with paneled

jamb blocks and architraves, finely carved coral bosses and multiple-order pointed arches ending in a trefoliate arch. The only dated example of this group is Bwana Bakari mosque, c. 1690, but the style is used throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In country mosques of the nineteenth century, especially in Zanzibar and the Tanzanian mainland, the trefoliate-arched mihrab can be distorted to up to seven lobes, producing an almost triangular arch, while in others the tendrils become so greatly exaggerated that they almost join together. Arcading in the apse is a common feature as is the use of plaster decoration and inset bowls, often using European porcelain. Many of these mihrabs remain in use today, and preserve much of the traditional pattern of usage in the placement of holy books, incense burners and an ostrich shell suspended from the apex of the niche.

p.494

Alongside these ornate mihrabs are examples of extreme simplicity and beauty, often called the 'classic' mihrab of the Swahili coast. It has a two-centred pointed arch of two or three orders, often with an apex nick, a simple capital supported on jamb blocks, and framed by an architrave that contains two rectangular niches for lamps or the Koran. The finest examples of these from the late thirteenth century include Ras Mkumbuu, Tongoni, Jumba la Mtwana (Kirkman 1974; Sassoon 1981) and the smaller mosques at Gede. Several of the fifteenth-century vaulted mosques have an even simpler version, a pointed arch without capital or decoration – examples include Chwaka, Kongo, Mwana and Jumba la Mtwana. Alongside these, and often in the same settlement, are found more elaborate versions, with capitals, architraves and the use of Chinese bowls inset into the wall – of which the most ornate example is the Chwaka Friday mosque.

The use of an elliptical (or mannerist) arch also became common from the fifteenth century. The first dated example is Msuka Mjini on which there is a scratch date of 1414. The pilasters carried two rounded headed niches decorated in *Porites* coral, and a particular feature at Msuka Mjini is the squared-off apse, a trait also found in the other Pemba mosques of Kichokochwe and Kiungoni. These eighteenth-century mihrabs have a curious, almost triangular, arch, which seems to be a cross between the pointed and round-headed traditions. The other elliptical arched mihrabs on Pemba occur at Chambani Mjini (Kirkman 1964), Micheweni, Shumba, Wingwi and Mandani; tradition associates these sites with the Balaawi (Buchanan 1932: 40), who are remembered as South Arabian sharifs who settled on Pemba. Mihrabs with elliptical arches and squared recesses are a particular feature of Yemeni mosques. The elliptical arch also occurs at eighteenth-century Kilwa Kisiwani and in three examples at Kua on Mafia Island. Two similar multi-ordered arches at Kilindini Mombasa and Tundwa combine the elliptical mihrab with the surround of the classic mihrab. On the Somali coast – for example in the mosques of Merca and the eighteenth-century replacement mihrab in the mosque of Fakhr ad Din – elliptical arches are particularly common.

Minbars

The minbar is the structure within the mosque from which the Friday sermon is delivered and therefore a defining feature of the Friday mosque. The earliest minbars were made of wood, and the only trace comes from wear patterns on the plaster floor, such as was found at Shanga. At Takwa part of the bracket attachment is visible. Some wooden minbars do survive from the sixteenth century at Siyu (1523), Lamu (1511) and undated at Pate, Matandoni and Tundwa.

Stone minbars are normally three stone steps on the eastern side of the mihrab. The most elaborate is a sixteenth-century eight-step example at Ungwana with a balustrade. There are fifteenth-century examples at Gede and Msuka Mjini, and a possibly a thirteenth-century case at Mtitimira. The tradition continues into the eighteenth century, especially on Pemba Island, while Kizimkazi has a minbar added at this time.

Minarets

In general, Swahili mosques do not have tower minarets (Schacht 1961). Instead a simple staircase to the roof was used for the call to prayer. This arrangement appears in the early mosque at Shanga, at Kaole in the fourteenth century as well as many of the Pemba mosques, and at Gede Friday mosque in the fifteenth century. It becomes a common feature thereafter. The absence of minarets may reflect the Islamic origins of the Swahili, and Ibadi influences in particular.

p.495

There are, however, two exceptions. A group of thirteenth-century towers are known from the Somali coast, of which the most famous is that at the Jamia at Mogadishu (1238) and other towers at Mogadishu, Merca and Barawa. These are circular and do not taper; they are thus similar to contemporary tower minarets in Yemen. The stump of a similar tower was also found at Ras Mkumbuu, of thirteenth-century date. All these towers are on or very close to the beach and might have also acted as navigational markers.

Second, there are several seventeenth- and eighteenth-century towers. Examples are Shela, Mombasa Old Town and Mbaraki (Sassoon 1982), and Zanzibar Malindi mosque. The towers are circular, tapering upwards and filled by an internal stair. These minarets are all found in settlements where there was significant Portuguese influence, and they may have been a local Islamic response to Christian church towers.

Tombs

Tombs are generally rare – considering the number of potential burials – and reserved for particular members of Swahili society. Many large sites have only a handful of tombs, with the majority of the population buried in unmarked graves.

Archaeological evidence suggests that there were two early forms of tomb. The first was the platform tomb, a stone plinth with two or three steps that rested over the grave pit. Along the top there is sometimes a triangular ridge. It is covered in plaster and often has Koranic verses scratched into the surface. At the east end there is often a raised block, with a sarcophagus-like head inset. This type is found at Shanga, Manda and Sake Cemetery at Kilwa, and dates between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. The second is a simple enclosure, built up from the ground level, marking out the grave pit. Some have doorways and may be more like family plots with multiple burials.

The addition of tombstones to either platforms or enclosures occurred early on, probably in the twelfth century. The tombstone is rounded and always rests at the east end. At Shanga some of the platform tombs and the majority of enclosures had tombstones. They are often plastered, with scratched inscriptions and more rarely inset inscriptions or bowls. Double tombstones are also occasionally found in a single enclosure. An important group of such tombstone tombs occurs at Mwana, one of which has an inset coral boss.

From these early forms the architecture of tombs developed in a number of distinct directions. The first is in the decoration of the top of the enclosure, probably from around the thirteenth century. Rather than a flat top, a parapet wall is added with step and/or smoothly upward-rising ends at each corner. In the Dondo tombs these step ends have bowl insets as well. This treatment is particularly exaggerated at Atu, where the ends take the form of horns. In particularly large tombs the step-end motive is repeated as a central stack.

The second development is in the treatment of the sides of the enclosure (Wilson 1979b). From the plain wall, the first elaboration is the addition of simple pilasters below a string-course that acts as panels. Then this string course was decorated with smaller square or rectangular niches. The larger panels were normally left plain, but on the northern Kenya coast during the fifteenth century they were filled with geometric designs, as at Dondo, Omwe and Ishakani. At Ungwana, a fifteenth-century tomb has cross-fitché decoration in cut coral. The tombs at Ishakani are particularly extraordinary as they cover a huge area, up to 60 m in length with, at their east end, pillars or tombstones. Here, pillars occur in conjunction with large decorated enclosures and tombstones, suggesting that the pillar is little more than an additional decorative feature.

p.496

Pillar tombs

Much has been written about ‘pillar tombs’, placing them within their own special

category with a non-Islamic origin. Idrisi's statement (Freeman-Grenville 1962: 19) that the Zanj near Barawa anointed standing stones with fish oil in the twelfth century is cited as evidence for the continuity of an African genre of pillar and phalli symbolism into an Islamic medium. In fact, there is no archaeological evidence for pre-Islamic standing stones along the coastal region, which could have formed such a model. The earliest pillar tombs occur at Lamu and Shanga, probably late thirteenth century, a gap of 200 years from the time of al-Idrisi. Both these examples are fluted in section, a detail that echoes contemporary mihrabs but is otherwise unknown.

From these two early examples a variety of different pillar forms developed. Circular, tapering pillars were common on the Kenya and Somali coast, at Chula, Kiamboni, Kiunga, Ishakani, Omwe and Mwana Mchama; at Dondo, the pillar was added to a tombstone tomb ([Figure 43.5](#)). Dondo and the second pillar tomb at Shanga have a ring around the top, Shanga and Omwe had a ceramic at the very top, most have inset bowls on the side. All these tombs date to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The two largest pillar tombs on the coast occur at Malindi and Mambrui, and probably date to the sixteenth century (Kirkman 1958). They are circular or multi-sided in the 'northern' tradition. The pillar-tomb tradition continued in the Lamu Archipelago, with eighteenth-century examples at Takwa (Kirkman 1957; Wilson 1979a) and Siyu.

South of Malindi there is a rather different pillar-tomb tradition. Here the pillars are either square or octagonal and largely undecorated. The tombs are more compact, with corners that rise rather than step-ended. The lower panels are undecorated, the string-course has repeated rectangular niches, sometimes using herringbone decoration. Examples are Mnarani (Kirkman 1959b), Gede, Ras Mkumbuu, Mkia wa Ngombe (Buchanan 1932), Tongoni (decorated with a Persian tile, Burton 1872, frontispiece; Stowell 1937), Kaole (Forster 1937; Hunter 1954) and Dar es Salaam. These all date from the late fourteenth century onwards, with the latest perhaps being Chwaka dating to the later fifteenth century, with likely inset Persian tiles rather than bowls, and an undecorated tomb except for plaster reliefs. The Ras Mkumbuu pillar tombs incorporate inner platform tombs entered through a western doorway.



[*Figure 43.5*](#) Pillar tomb at Dondo

p.497

Domed tombs

Domed tombs at first sight represent a break in the tomb tradition of the coast, away from the free standing tomb to an enclosed room entered through a door. The beginnings are perhaps visible in the inner tombs at Mkumbuu, while some of the large enclosures at Shanga have entrances. Niches or small windows on the outside of tombs were another feature of northern tombs with associated broken pottery suggesting that they acted as places of visitation and prayer. Creating a domed space for prayer seems a logical extension of this tradition.

Dating evidence is imprecise, but it appears that domed tombs date from the mid-fifteenth century, contemporary with the introduction of vaulted mosques. Early examples retain step ends, as at Ungwana, Lamu and Omwe. The two domed tombs of Pate and three of Siyu are certainly eighteenth century in date. Beyond the Kenya coast, domed tombs are very much rarer. There is one at Bur Gao in Somalia (Chittick 1969), and an eighteenth-century double-domed tomb in the Malindi cemetery at Kilwa. There are also very late and crude domed tombs from Matondoni (Lamu island).

The revival of Swahili tomb architecture

Elaborate tomb construction started again during the later eighteenth century. Ancient sites such as Tongoni, Kaole and Kunduchi (Sassoon 1966) long abandoned were suddenly

reused. New enclosures were added to old tombs, new cemeteries were established on old sites. On the Tanzania coast older Swahili sites were targeted for burial, this may have been part of a wider reassertion of local identity in the face of settlement from Oman.

This revival is associated with a particular new form – the hut tomb. Like the domed tomb it is a roofed space, but much smaller. One feature of these tombs, as at Kunduchi, is that they are placed inside larger enclosures, with an entry door. At Kunduchi, the pillar tomb also re-appears, although now with a turban-like ending.

Discussion

There is no doubt that the Islamic architecture of the Swahili coast represents local innovation and a unique vernacular tradition. Yet it is also a remarkably conservative tradition. The form of mosques and tombs were created during the early second millennium and changed little in succeeding centuries. Instead of a gradual evolution of styles, such as Garlake (1966) attempted to map, the eleventh to nineteenth centuries on the coast saw the repetition and elaboration of a series of established forms and styles. These create a distinctively Swahili form of Islamic architecture and a unique contribution that the coast made to the wider world.

References

- Allen, J. de V. 1979. 'The Swahili house: cultural and ritual concepts underlying its plan and structure'. In *Swahili Houses and Tombs of the Coast of Kenya*, edited by J. de V. Allen and T. H. Wilson, 1–32. London: Art and Archaeology Research Papers.
- Buchanan, L. A. C. 1932. *The Ancient Monuments of Zanzibar*. Zanzibar: Government Printer.
- Burton, Sir R. 1872. *Zanzibar, City, Island and Coast*. London.
- Chittick, H. N. 1961. *Kisimani Mafia: Excavations at an Islamic settlement on the East African Coast*. Dar es Salaam: Antiquities Division Occasional Paper no. 1.
- Chittick, H. N. 1962. 'Preliminary report on the excavations at Kizimkazi Dembani, Zanzibar'. *Tanganyika Antiquities Report for 1960*, Dar es Salaam: 17–19.
- Chittick, H. N. 1966. 'Report on the excavations at Kisimani Mafia and Kua'. *Tanzania Antiquities Report for 1964*, Dar es Salaam: 15–16.
- Chittick, H. N. 1969. 'An archaeological reconnaissance of the southern Somali coast'. *Azania* 4: 115–30.

- Chittick, H. N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*, 2 Vols. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa, Memoir 5.
- Creswell K. A. C. and Allen, J. 1989. *A Short Account of Muslim Architecture* (revised edition). Cairo: American University Press.
- Donley-Reid, L. 1982. 'House power: Swahili space and symbolic markers'. In *Symbolic and Structural Archaeology*, edited by I. Hodder. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fischer, R. 1984. *Korallenstadte in Afrika*. Oberdorf: Edition Piscatot.
- Fleisher, J. and LaViolette, A. 2013. 'The early Swahili trade village of Tumbe, Pemba Island, Tanzania, AD 600–950'. *Antiquity* 87 (338): 1151–68.
- Flury S. 1922. 'The Kufic inscription of Kizimkazi Mosque, Zanzibar, AD 1107'. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 21: 257–64.
- Forster, N. 1937. 'A note on some ruins near Bagomoyo'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 3: 106–10.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1962. *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the First to the Earlier 19th Centuries*. London: Clarendon Press.
- Freeman-Grenville G. S. P. and Martin B. G. 1973. 'A preliminary handlist of the Arabic inscriptions of the East African coast'. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2: 98–104.
- Garlake, P. 1966. *The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa, Memoir 1.
- Ghaidan, U. 1976. *Lamu, A Study of the Swahili Town*. Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau.
- Horton, M. C. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. C. 2004. 'Islam, archaeology and Swahili identity'. In *Changing Social Identity with the Spread of Islam: Archaeological Perspectives*, edited by D. Whitcomb, 67–88. Chicago: Oriental Institute Seminar Number 1.
- Horton, M. C. 2013. 'Ibadis in East Africa: archaeological and historical evidence'. In *Oman and Overseas*, edited by M. Hoffmann-Ruf, A. al-Salimi and H. Gaube, 93–106. Tübingen: OLMS.
- Horton, M. C. in press. *Zanzibar and Pemba: The Archaeology of an Indian Ocean Archipelago*. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. C. and Middleton J. 2000. *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hunter, G. 1954. 'A note on some tombs at Kaole'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, 37.
- Inzerillo, M. 1980. *Le Moschee di Mogadiscio*. Palermo: Ilpalma.
- Juma, A. 2004. *Unguja Ukuu on Zanzibar: An Archaeological Study of Early Urbanism*. Uppsala: Uppsala University.
- Kirkman, J. S. 1954. *The Arab City of Gedi: Excavations at the Great Mosque. Architecture and*

Finds. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kirkman, J. S. 1957. 'Takwa: the mosque and the pillar'. *Ars Orientalis* 2: 175–82.

Kirkman, J. S. 1958. 'The great pillars of Malindi and Mambui'. *Oriental Art* 4 (2): 3–15.

Kirkman, J. S. 1959a. 'Excavations at Ras Mkumbuu on the island of Pemba'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 53: 161–78.

Kirkman, J. S. 1959b. 'Mnarani of Kilifi: the mosques and the tombs'. *Ars Orientalis* 3: 95–112.

Kirkman, J. S. 1963. *Gedi, the Palace*. The Hague: Mouton and Co.

Kirkman, J. S. 1964. *Men and Monuments on the East African Coast*. London: Lutterworth Press.

Kirkman, J. S. 1966. *Ungwana on the Tana*. The Hague: Mouton and Co.

Kirkman, J. S. 1974. 'Notes on Jumba la Mtwana'. Typescript, Fort Jesus Museum.

Lambourn, E. 2004. 'Carving and communities: marble carving for Muslim communities at Khambhat and around the Indian Ocean rim (late 13th–mid-15th centuries CE). *Ars Orientalis* 34: 101–35.

Pradines, S. 2009. 'L'île de Sanjé ya Kati (Kilwa, Tanzania): un myth Shirâzi bien réel'. *Azania* 44 (1): 49–74.

p.499

Rougeulle, A. 2015. *Sharma: Un Entrepôt de Commerce Médiéval sur la Côte du Hadramawt (Yémen, ca. 980–1180)*. Oxford: Archaeopress.

Sassoon, H. 1966. *Guide to the Ruins at Kunduchi*. Dar es Salaam: Antiquities Division.

Sassoon, H. 1980. 'Excavations at the site of early Mombasa'. *Azania* 15: 1–42.

Sassoon, H. 1981. *Jumba la Mtwana Guide*. Nairobi: Kenya Museums Society.

Sassoon, H. 1982. 'The mosque and the pillar at Mbaraki: a contribution to the history of Mombasa Island'. *Azania* 17: 79–98.

Schacht, J. 1957. 'An unknown type of Minbar and its historical significance'. *Ars Orientalis* 5 (2): 149–73.

Schacht, J. 1961. 'Further notes on the staircase minaret'. *Ars Orientalis* 4: 137–41.

Stowell, R. F. 1937. 'Notes on some ruins at Tongoni near Tanga'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 4: 75–7.

Whitehouse, D. 1984. 'The smaller mosques at Siraf, a footnote'. *Iran* 12: 166.

Wilding, R. 1975. 'A preliminary note on the second mosque at Mwana'. *Azania* 10: 149–50.

Wilson, T. H. 1978. *The Monumental Architecture and Archaeology North of the Tana River*. Nairobi: National Museums of Kenya.

Wilson, T. H. 1979a. 'Takwa, an ancient Swahili settlement of the Lamu Archipelago'.

Kenya Past and Present 10: 6–16.

- Wilson T. H. 1979b. 'Swahili funerary architecture of the north Kenya coast'. In *Swahili Houses and Tombs of the Coast of Kenya*, edited by J. de V. Allen and T. H. Wilson, 33–48. London: Art and Archaeology Research Papers.
- Wilson, T. H. 1980. *The Monumental Architecture and Archaeology of the Central and Southern Kenyan Coast*. Nairobi: National Museums of Kenya.
- Wright, H. T. 1992. 'Early Islam, oceanic trade and town development on Nzwani: the Comorian Archipelago in the XIth–XVth Centuries'. *Azania* 28: 81–128.

44

SWAHILI HOUSES

Thomas Gensheimer

Introduction

The Swahili architectural tradition, which includes buildings of coral and lime, sets coastal society apart from its hinterland neighbours. For scholars, this ‘stone’ architecture has been seen as the quintessential expression of Swahili society; ethnographic accounts also emphasise its importance in contemporary identity politics on the eastern African coast (Meier, this volume). When the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama first encountered the coast in 1498, he was astounded to find well-developed urban centres with buildings of ‘stone and mortar, with windows and terraces like those of Spain’ (Theal [1900] 1964, Vol. 6: 179). These stone-built houses were a characteristic feature of medieval Swahili settlements from southern Somalia to northern Mozambique, constructed by the elite Swahili merchant class to serve as symbols of their position and status within the urban community.

During the fourteenth and throughout the fifteenth century, these elaborate stone mansions were the result of new forms of masonry construction, and a distinctive architectural design and decorative system, forming a unique and coherent building tradition that continued along the coast until colonial times. The site of Gede (also Gedi) along the central coast of Kenya (Map 1, p. xxii) was one of the largest urban centres during the medieval period with nearly 300 stone houses and a large palace complex (Pradines 2010: 19). These houses display a consistent plan and design that typifies Swahili architectural developments throughout coastal region, and will be used in this chapter as representative examples of Swahili domestic architecture in the period prior to European contact.

By its very nature, masonry construction along the eastern African coast was material- and labour-intensive, involving the quarrying of fossilised coral rag (often from softer underground sources), the burning of coral stone to make lime for cement and plaster

(which had to be slaked for months or years), and the cutting of mangrove and other hardwoods for roof beams. Walls were thick and substantial, constructed using coral rag stone bound together with a generous slurry of lime mortar. Defined lines and sharp edges were maintained around arched doorways, niches and other moulded features through the use of dressed coral blocks and precisely shaped edge-pieces, mined from undersea deposits of fine-grained *Porites* coral, which were then carefully fitted together. All surfaces, including floors, were covered with a fine layer of lime plaster, creating smooth white surfaces that could be washed and kept clean. Rooms were long and narrow due to the spanning capacity of the mangrove poles and squared timbers used in roof construction, limited to between 1.80 and 2.80 m. Houses followed a standard plan and arrangement of rooms as a contiguous sequence of parallel spaces, consistent from the medieval period into later times (Garlake 1966: 15–24).

p.501

Stone houses of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries

The stone houses of the medieval period were most often single-storey structures, although a few have been found to have second stories. They usually supported a flat masonry roof, although there is evidence that peaked, timber-framed *makuti* (woven palm frond) roofs were also used, at least in part, to cover some structures (Wynne-Jones 2013). Generally, these houses lacked imposing façades and there was little emphasis on vertical massing.

Although many Swahili houses stood as isolated structures, often they were built as inter-linked clusters, sharing common walls and forming what has been referred to as ‘complex houses’ containing multiple units (Wilson 1979, 1982; Horton 1984; Kusimba 1993). At times these created dense continuous blocks within the urban environment, with a tight interwoven network of narrow passageways leading to recessed house entrances. The house block excavated at Gede contained at least 11 individual dwelling units, sharing common party walls with complex interlocking plans ([Figure 44.1](#)). Similarly, the so-called palace structure at Songo Mnara may have comprised as many as 15 separate but interconnected dwellings. Such intricate plans would have involved cooperation, joint planning and simultaneous construction of several units at once, implying strong family or social bonds between residents and collaboration between builders (Garlake 1966: 89–90).



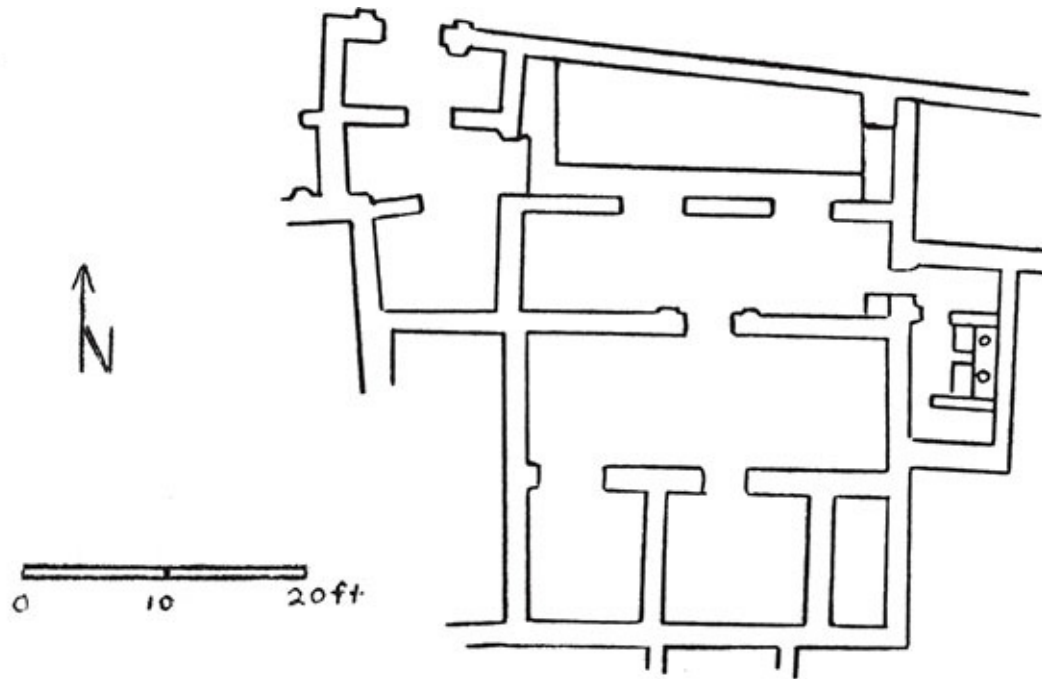
[*Figure 44.1*](#) Excavated house block at Gede showing interlocking plans of individual houses (After Kirkman 1975: 12)

From the exterior, Swahili stone houses were plain and windowless, with only an interior courtyard to allow light and air to enter the inner spaces. The courtyards were predominantly oriented to the north, possibly for climatic reasons. The northern position of the courtyard would let sunlight penetrate the main rooms to the south of the court, allowing for maximum warming of the house during the coolest months of the year, during and following the monsoons of April through June. Similarly, this orientation

minimised the sun's penetration into the house during the warmest months, January through March, as well as providing maximum protection against the strong southwest monsoon winds. When a northerly orientation was not possible, an easterly orientation was preferred, with both the northern and eastern orientations taking advantage of the prevailing winds to cool the interior of the house. Least common were southern and westerly orientations, which were more open to the monsoon winds and allowed the afternoon heat to penetrate into the house during the hottest part of the day (Garlake 1966: 89).

Swahili houses generally follow a consistent design, whose basic plan and elements were found throughout the coastal region during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, even in settlements with only a few stone-built structures. The House of the Cowries at Gede dates to the end of the fourteenth century, and displays an arrangement of spaces and architectural elements representative of medieval Swahili houses ([Figure 44.2](#)). The house was entered through a small lobby, leading to a large rectangular courtyard with a sunken floor. The sunken court was surrounded on three sides by a low terrace, which may have provided seating ([Figure 44.3](#)). To the south of the court were three rooms arranged in a parallel sequence. These were invariably long and narrow, with their depth limited by the mangrove poles that supported the masonry roofs.

The first room was entered through double doorways, with a lavatory consisting of two small spaces separated by a low wall, off one end. One side of the lavatory contained a slightly raised bathing platform consisting of two separate coral blocks on which to stand, with a gap between them for water to drain. A raised shelf-like platform with indentations provided a place for round-bottomed ceramic pots to be set, supplying water used for washing. The other side contained a pit latrine where waste materials were collected and water would drain. These pits were dug to a substantial depth; Pradines (2002: 15) excavated a house latrine at Gede to a depth of over 6 m, and Kirkman (1963: 18) found the pit toilet at the House of the Dhow at Gede to be over 8 m and its chamber 'carefully revetted and plastered'. In somewhat similar fashion, the smoothly plastered floors of the sunken courts and interior rooms were embedded with carefully constructed drains that emptied into sumps, allowing the floors to be sluiced and rain water drained. At the Palace at Gede, these sumps averaged only 75 cm wide, but they were dug to a depth of between 5 and 6 m and corbeled at the top, to a circular coral block with a small hole in the middle (Kirkman 1963: 22).



[*Figure 44.2*](#) Plan of the House of the Cowries showing arrangement of spaces characteristic of Swahili stone houses at Gede (After Kirkman 1975: 12)



[*Figure 44.3*](#) House entrance and sunken courtyard, typical of medieval stone houses at Gede, from House of the Double Court

The second room of the House of the Cowries was entered by a single door, and the innermost room subdivided into three smaller rooms, which Kirkman (1964: 109) identified as a kitchen, bedroom and storeroom. In some cases, back rooms contained stone benches or wooden shelves that were considered to serve as sleeping platforms (Garlake

1966: 92–3), although others have questioned this interpretation (Ghaidan 1975: 55). Storerooms designed for the safekeeping of valuables were common, entered by ladders through small openings high up on the wall. These were found off the bedrooms of every house at Gede (Kirkman 1964: 106). This basic plan was followed for medieval stone houses, although generally the middle or back room was divided in two and the kitchen omitted from the rear. The House of the Panelled Walls at Gede conforms to this plan, with a sunken court and two arched doorways leading to the main room, which contains an adjacent lavatory. Behind this room were two suites of rooms with a storeroom located off the inner room of the western suite.

Swahili medieval houses were often elaborated and extended to emphasise the affluence of the owner by increasing the number of rooms arranged in contiguous sequence or by adding additional courts. The House of the Sunken Court at Gede had an added doorway leading from one of the innermost rooms to a lobby providing access to an additional suite of two rooms, a lavatory and an inner domestic court containing a small well, foot bath and water storage jars (Kirkman n/d: 14–15).

p.504

The interior spaces of these stone houses were designed to create a setting of elegance and luxury, perhaps with the intent to impress the local community and foreign merchants who frequented the coast and on whom Swahili traders depended for their wealth. Finely plastered sunken courtyards would provide a formalised setting for daily activities and social interactions. Decorative arched doorways often led from the courtyard to the inner rooms, some of which may have been fitted with heavy wooden doors, possibly carved with decorative designs. An account of the coastal city of Kilwa by Duarte Barbosa from 1517–18 states that ‘The doors are of wood, well carved, with excellent joinery’ (Freeman-Grenville 1975: 131), and when the Portuguese raided Faza in 1587 wooden doors were known to have been carried away as booty (Strandes 1989: 131).

At Gede, finely constructed alcoves were sometimes added for the storage and display of pots for drinking water within elegant decorative recesses ([Figure 44.4](#)). Wall niches were frequently placed in the courtyard and inner rooms to enliven the surfaces and to possibly provide spaces for oil lamps. Some rooms had rows of these decorative niches along their back walls, likely for the display of items of status and wealth such as imported ceramics from Arabia, Persia and even China, or religious items such as handwritten Qur’ans ([Figure 44.5](#)). At times, plastered surfaces were adorned with wall hangings, as evidenced by the presence of fixing holes at eye level, spaced along the walls within important rooms (Garlake 1966: 87).



[*Figure 44.4*](#) Alcove for storing drinking water in House of the Cistern, Gede



[*Figure 44.5*](#) Wall niches from inner room of a house, Ungwana

Buried pots presumed to have contained ritual substances, known as *mafingo*, were sometimes placed at entrances or corners of rooms. Two were located within the Palace at Gede; at the entrance to a sunken court at the rear that served as the women's reception room, and within the inner room of an apartment within the Palace annex (Kirkman 1963: 26–7, 33). Similar *mafingo* have been found at the sites of Songo Mnara (Wynne-Jones 2013: 770) and Pujini, (Fleisher and LaViolette 2007: 190), and are believed to provide spiritual protection for the spaces within, a practice linking the Swahili to other indigenous cultures within the coastal region and interior.

The extensive amount of resources devoted to the construction, design and decoration of these stone houses reflected the growing wealth of the merchant elites within Swahili society and the accumulation of capital resulting from the medieval Indian Ocean trade. They were built and designed as a reflection of the status of the occupants and to facilitate commercial connections within the larger Muslim world. Ibn Battuta, who visited the coast in the first half of the fourteenth century, states of his visit to Mogadishu:

... when a ship comes into port, it is boarded from *sanbuqs*, that is to say, little boats. Each *sanbuq* carries a crowd of young men, each carrying a covered dish, containing food. Each one of them presents his dish to a merchant on board, and calls out: 'This man is my guest.' And his fellows do the same. Not one of the merchants disembarks except to go to the house of his host among the young men When a merchant has settled in his host's house, the latter sells for him what he has brought and makes his purchases for him. Buying anything except in his host's presence is disapproved of by the people of Mogadishu.

(Freeman-Grenville 1975: 27–8.)

For this reason, the scale and elegance of Swahili houses were designed for impressing

visiting merchants and to facilitate this process of commercial exchange. These grand mansions provided rooms to house visiting merchants, formal sunken courtyards that could function as commercial space for the display and exchange of imported goods, and the presence of storerooms to collect and secure goods as part of the process of interregional exchange. As such, Swahili houses functioned as a visible expression of the creditworthiness of the owner and his ability to be trusted to conduct long-distance trade (Allen 1979: 5).

p.506

Stone houses of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

The destruction and subjugation of many Swahili city-states at the beginning of the sixteenth century led to a general decline, as the Portuguese came to dominate the politics of the eastern African coast and commerce within the western Indian Ocean for the next two centuries (Prestholdt, this volume). With the expulsion of the Portuguese from Mombasa in 1698 and the rise of Omani control, Swahili urban centres prospered once again with renewed commercial activity and an influx of Arab and Indian cultural influences throughout the region. The introduction of a slave-dominated plantation economy controlled by the *waungwana*, the long-established indigenous African merchant and ruling elites, furthered divisions within Swahili society between those who claimed ancestral Arab descent on the one hand, and indigenous labourers and agriculturalists on the other, who were subject to the land-owning elites. This resulted in a renewed importance of stone-built architecture as a means of designating and maintaining social and political boundaries (Sheriff, this volume). Swahili houses along the northern coast in the Lamu Archipelago exemplify developments in domestic architecture during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which followed traditions established during the medieval period, but reflect new sources of influence coming from areas of commercial and cultural contacts within the western Indian Ocean basin.

Characteristic of domestic structures throughout the Islamic world, Swahili houses were designed to maintain a sense of privacy and gender segregation, creating an intimacy gradient that leads from public male-centred spaces to more private female-centred spaces as one progresses through the structure (Ghaidan 1975: 75–6). Traditionally the house was entered through a covered alcove or porch (*daka*) with built-in stone benches (*baraza*) flanking the entryway. This external space faces onto the street, providing a setting for male members of the households to socialise or conduct business, and where guests can be entertained without having to enter the private areas within the house. A heavy wooden door marks the transition to the interior, creating both a physical and symbolic barrier to the protected inner spaces ([Figure 44.6](#)). Fashioning large decorated doors as a symbol of wealth and status is an established tradition within the Islamic world and its revival along

the eastern African coast resulted from renewed influences coming from Oman and western India during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Aldrick 1990).

Swahili doors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were made from hardwoods cut from inland forests that formerly occupied much of the coastal region. They typically consist of two panels and a centre post which, despite its structural appearance, is simply attached to one side to cover the seam. The doorposts are elaborately carved with triangular patterns, fleur-de-lis and rosettes. Likewise, the frame and frequently the lintels are carved with a continuous curvilinear decoration of lotus blossoms, stylised date palms, fish scales and generic floral motifs in a version of an Islamic arabesque pattern. Often a chain is carved along the outer frame, symbolising physical security and protection. A passage from the Qur'an may be carved in Arabic above the entrance, providing a talisman to protect those within. However, these inscriptions may also contain 'bits of poetry, the name of the master of the house, and the craftsman's name or initials' (Siravo and Pulver 1986: 45).



[*Figure 44.6*](#) Carved door in Lamu

These heavy doors open into a small rectangular courtyard (*kiwanda*), which provides light and air to the interior spaces. Off the court are a sequence of three or four narrow rooms arranged in parallel sequence, with each subsequent floor raised 10 cm above the next to signify the transition and to reinforce the increasing sense of intimacy as one moves towards the inner spaces of the house. In some houses, a reception room (*sabule*) would be located on the opposite side of the court, to serve as a guest house or space for men to conduct business and socialise, isolating them from the inner parts of the house where women would be present. Larger houses may also have an inner vestibule (*tekani*) with additional seats for social interaction.

The first room off the courtyard (*msana wa tini*) was entered through large double doorways and would be an area for male family members to eat and also sleep in beds behind curtains at either ends of the room. The second room (*msana wa yuu*) provided a sleeping area for female family members and was used in similar fashion. The innermost

room (*ndani*) was the master bedroom and reserved largely for women, entered through a single large doorway. Within this female-dominated space, the most private and ritually significant activities of daily life would take place, such as consummating marriages, giving birth and washing the bodies of the dead prior to burial. Likewise, stillborn babies born to the *waungwana* mothers would be buried in the floor of the *ndani*.

p.508

Ethnographies of twentieth-century Lamu have linked these inner spaces to those ritually polluting activities, and the need to spiritually protect the women residing within in various ways. Animal sacrifices and burials were at times performed in the *ndani* to ‘close the house to evil spirits’ (*kufunga ya nyumba*) (Donley 1987). Likewise, the rear wall of the *ndani* would be highly decorated, with multiple tiers of elaborately arched plaster niches (*zidaka*), similar in form and design to the *mihrab* niches within Swahili mosques ([Figure 44.7](#)). These niches were used to display imported ceramics that served both as symbols of status and wealth, and formed a backdrop to *waungwana* marriage rituals. They also served a spiritual function to protect against malevolent spirits (*jinni*) and insure the purity of the women residing within.

Some houses also had a fourth room (*nyumba kati*) further back, which functioned as a storage space. Combined pit latrines and bathing areas (*choo*) would be located off this back room or, in its absence, accessed from the *ndani*. An additional *choo* was placed off the courtyard or the *sabule* for the use of male family members and guests. All would have built-in stone cisterns, often with inset porcelain bowls or plates at the bottom.



[Figure 44.7](#) Innermost room (*ndani*) of Swahili house in Lamu with *zidaka* niches

Stone-built Swahili houses generally began as a single-storey structure, but many would have a second storey added later, accessed from a stairway on the side of the courtyard. The need for a second storey may occur with the marriage of a daughter, since stone houses or parts of houses are given to women when they marry. Traditionally, at the birth of a daughter the father would begin to accumulate the lime and building materials needed to build another stone house, or enlarge his own to accommodate her new family upon her wedding, which was customarily to her cousin. The lower floor would then be used for storage and servants, and the upper floor reserved as living spaces for the *waungwana* family, with the rooms following the same plan and intimacy gradient as in the original structure.

p.509

On the uppermost terrace of the Swahili house would commonly be a penthouse (*kidari*) serving as a kitchen, covered with a thatch roof. These would lead to interconnected roofs, allowing women to move from house to house without having to go into the streets. At times, second-storey rooms would be connected to adjacent houses through doorways or rooms bridging over the streets (*wikio*), connecting members of the same

family together architecturally and allowing women to visit without having to venture into the male-dominated public spaces of the city.

Prior to the eighteenth century, plasterwork in Swahili houses was used only to create smooth surfaces and for covering decorative elements carved in fine-grained coral. By 1750 carved plasterwork was used extensively to decorate interior rooms, although it seems to stop around 1830 (Allen 1973: 6). The carving becomes increasingly more intricate and detailed the further one ventured into the interior, with the frieze around the grand doorway leading to the *ndani* usually the most elaborately decorated, often with niches added on either side of the door jambs. Individual wall niches may also be found at either end of the *msana ya tini* and the *msana ya yuu*, often surrounded by abstract carved plaster patterns and figures in a chip carving style.

Earthen houses of the Swahili coast

When Ibn Battuta arrived at Kilwa, the largest and wealthiest city along the medieval coast, he stated that it was: ‘among the most beautiful of cities and most elegantly built. All of it is wood, and the ceiling of the houses are of *al-dis* (reeds)’ (Hamdun and King 1995: 22). His account of the city as constructed of wood and thatch is somewhat problematic since it contradicts the popular vision of Swahili urban settlements as consisting largely of stone-built structures. But Ibn Battuta’s arrival in 1331 may have been prior to the extensive building of domestic structures in coral that began at Kilwa and other Swahili settlements during the fourteenth century. Kilwa was also a town at which only a minority of houses were ever built of coral, albeit on a massive scale. Coastal settlement up until the tenth century was made up exclusively of earthen structures, and many towns occupied into the fifteenth century may also have been composed of houses almost exclusively, or at least extensively, built of earth, timber and thatch (LaViolette and Fleisher 2009).

Swahili settlements traditionally comprise a continuum of domestic structures, from houses built in stone to those built of earth, timber and thatch, both of which contributed significantly to the distinctive character of the Swahili urban environment from the medieval period into colonial times (Sheriff 2001, this volume). For many minor Swahili towns and predominantly those along the southern Swahili coast, stone construction was largely reserved for religious architecture (mosques and tombs) and domestic architecture was extensively built of less permanent materials. Even within stone-built cities, the extensive presence of less permanent structures was noted by Hans Mayr, a German who accompanied Dom Francisco de Almeida to eastern Africa in 1505, where he states that the city of Mombasa ‘has more than 600 wooden houses covered with palm . . . and the houses built of masonry have these others amongst them’. These houses were so prevalent and such an integral component of the Swahili city that when the Portuguese conquerors set Mombasa ablaze ‘the whole city burned like one huge fire that lasted nearly all night’

(Rego and Baxter 1962: 531). Other European accounts of the coast from the sixteenth century describe houses of similar materials and construction. At Sofala, de Barros notes that the 'houses were all of wood and laths plastered with clay, according to their usual custom, and thatched with palm leaves' (Theal [1900] 1964: Vol. 6: 262). De Goes likewise supports this account, stating that the 'houses were large, of one story covered with palm leaves, the walls of wattles plastered with clay' (Theal [1900] 1964: Vol. 3: 123).

p.510

Relatively little of above-ground architectural remains survive of these non-masonry Swahili houses, but their archaeological presence has been noted at medieval sites all along the coast. In the early levels of Manda, Shanga and Kilwa, for example, structures of timber and clay were identified by the presence of post-holes and burnt daub remains, built on a rectilinear pattern that suggests these structures resembled the earthen domestic structures historically built along the coast until the present day (Chittick 1974: 28, 1984: 14, 16).

Contemporary earthen houses are rectangular in plan and constructed of wooden poles, usually mangrove, set closely together into the ground. These form a framework of vertical members into which are woven horizontal cross-members to create a lattice whose spaces are infilled with pressed clayey earth, at times mixed with coral chips, in a wattle-and-daub technique. A protective coating of mud is applied to the interior and exterior walls, and floors are made of packed earth. Roofs are peaked and constructed with a mangrove-pole frame, to which are attached a thatching of woven coconut fronds ([Figure 44.8](#)). Such houses are the historically traditional form found on the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba from at least the nineteenth century, and considered the result of Arab influences along the coast (McKim 1985: 66).

These earthen houses share some similarities in plan and spatial organisation to stone-built houses. Donley's (1984: 118) documentation of a Bajuni house in Lamu consisted of three long and narrow parallel rooms arranged in a sequence similar in plan and use to stone-built houses. The outermost room formed the *baraza* (meeting place) where meals were also eaten. This room may be divided to create a separate activity room called the *sabule*, which may have functioned as a guest room or additional room for married daughters or grandparents. The middle room served as a bedroom, with male and female children sleeping on either ends of the room. The innermost room was where the parents slept, off which was located the lavatory. This room was the equivalent of the *ndani* in the stone-built house and was largely occupied by women, while men stayed in the *baraza* or the outside of the house.



[Figure 44.8](#) Earthen houses at Faza, Siyu Island, Kenya

Architectural similarities to stone houses were also noted by Fleisher and LaViolette (1999: 92–3) in contemporary earthen houses on Pemba Island. Rooms were similarly long and narrow, with the innermost room used for sleeping and reserved predominantly for women, which was entered through a more public room leading to the exterior of the house. Two side rooms served as the *sebule* and as a storage space, both accessed from exterior doors and isolated from other interior spaces. The *baraza* consisted of a stone bench that surrounded the exterior walls.

p.511

Swahili domestic architecture thus includes multiple influences and traditions at different places and times. The division between stone and non-stone architecture was probably part of how social divisions were created and understood in the past, a dichotomy that arose in the medieval period and continued into more recent times. Houses built in stone at the centre of the city signified the *wa-ungwana*, the elite patricians within Swahili society, who possessed wealth, engaged in commerce and were oriented outward towards the sea. Houses built in less permanent materials on the periphery may have been linked to lower class citizens. In recent centuries this is certainly the case, although there are indications at sites like Chwaka that status distinctions might not have been so clear cut in the past. Stone and earthen architecture on the Swahili coast were part of a continuum: a vernacular tradition that shapes urban spaces in unique ways. In that sense, Swahili domestic architecture is a physical metaphor of Swahili society, one that explicates social divisions, reinforces social hierarchies and mediates power relationships within the Swahili urban settlement.

References

Aldrick, J. 1990. 'The nineteenth-century carved wooden doors of the East African coast'. *Azania* 25: 1–18.

- Allen, J. de V. 1973. 'Swahili ornament: a study of the decoration of the 18th century plasterwork and carved doors in the Lamu region'. *Art and Archaeology Research Papers* 3: 1–13.
- Allen, J. de V. 1979. 'The Swahili house: cultural and ritual concepts underlying its plan and structure'. In *Swahili Houses and Tombs of the Coast of Kenya*, edited by J. de V. Allen and T. H. Wilson, 1–32. London: Art and Archaeology Research Papers.
- Chittick, H. N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*, Vol. 1. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Chittick, H. N. 1984. *Manda: Excavations at an Island Port on the Kenya Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Donley, L. W. 1984. 'The social uses of Swahili space and objects'. PhD diss., University of Cambridge.
- Donley, L. 1987. 'Life in the Swahili town house reveals the symbolic meaning of spaces and artefact assemblages'. *African Archaeological Review* 5: 181–92.
- Donley, L. 1990. 'A structuring structure: the Swahili house'. In *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space*, edited by S. Kent, 114–26. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fleisher, J. B. and LaViolette, A. 1999. 'Elusive wattle-and-daub: finding the hidden majority in the archaeology of the Swahili'. *Azania* 34: 87–108.
- Fleisher, J. B. and LaViolette, A. 2007. 'The changing power of Swahili houses, fourteenth to nineteenth centuries AD'. In *The Durable House: House Society Models in Archaeology*, edited by R. A. Beck Jr., 175–97. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University.
- Fleisher, J. and Wynne-Jones, A. 2010. 'Archaeological investigations at Songo Mnara, Tanzania: urban space. Social memory and materiality on the 15th- and 16th-century southern Swahili coast'. *Preliminary Report Submitted to the Department of Antiquities*. Republic of Tanzania.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1975. *The East African Coast: Selected Documents from the First to the Earlier Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Garlake, P. 1966. *The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Ghaidan, U. I. 1975. *Lamu: A Study of the Swahili Town*. Dar es Salaam: East African Literature Bureau.
- Hamdun, S. and King, N. 1995. *Ibn Battuta in Black Africa*. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishing.
- Horton, M. 1984. 'The early settlement of the northern Swahili coast'. PhD diss., University of Cambridge.
- Horton, M. 1986. 'Asiatic colonization of the East African coast: the Manda evidence'. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2: 200–13.

- Horton, M. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Kirkman, J. n.d. 'Gedi: the house and the walls'. Fort Jesus Archives.
- Kirkman, J. 1963. *Gedi: The Palace*. The Hague: Mouton & Co.
- Kirkman, J. 1964. *Men and Monuments on the East African Coast*. London: Lutterworth Press.
- Kirkman, J. 1975. *Gedi*. Nairobi: National Museums of Kenya.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1993. 'The archaeology and ethnography of iron metallurgy on the Kenya coast'. PhD diss., Bryn Mawr College.
- LaViolette, A. and Fleisher, J. 2009. 'The urban history of a rural place: Swahili archaeology on Pemba Island, Tanzania, 700–1500 AD'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 42 (3): 433–55.
- McKim, W. 1985. 'House types in Tanzania: a century of change'. *Journal of Cultural Geography* 6: 51–77.
- Pradines, S. 2002. 'La maison wa-ungwana du XVe au XVI siècle: mission archéologique Française de Gedi'. *Nyame Akuma* 58 (2): 13–18.
- Pradines, S. 2010. *Gedi, Une Cité Portuaire Swahilie*. Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale.
- Rego, A. Da S. and Baxter, T. W. 1962. *Documents on the Portuguese in Mozambique and Central Africa*, Vol. 1. Lisbon: National Archives of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.
- Sheriff, A. 2001. 'The spatial dichotomy of Swahili towns: the case of Zanzibar in the nineteenth century'. *Azania* 36–7 (1): 63–81.
- Siravo, F. and Pulver, A. 1986. *Planning Lamu: Conservation of an East African Seaport*. Nairobi: National Museums of Kenya.
- Strandes, J. 1989. *The Portuguese Period in East Africa*. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau.
- Theal, G. M. [1900] 1964. *Records of South-Eastern Africa*, Vols. 3 and 6. London: William Clowes and Sons Ltd. Facsimile reprint: Capetown: C. Struik (Pty.) Ltd.
- Wilson, T. H. 1979. 'Takwa, an ancient Swahili settlement of the Lamu Archipelago'. *Kenya Past and Present* 10: 7–16.
- Wilson, T. H. 1982. 'Spatial analysis and settlement patterns on the East African coast'. In *From Zinj to Zanzibar: Studies in History, Trade and Society on the Eastern Coast of Africa*, edited by J. de V. Allen and T. Wilson. *Paideuma* 28: 201–19.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2013. 'The public life of the Swahili stone house, 14th–15th centuries AD'. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 23: 759–73.

PART III

The early modern and modern Swahili coast

Colonial domination and the rise of Zanzibar

45

NAVIGATING THE EARLY MODERN WORLD

Swahili polities and the continental– oceanic interface

Jeremy Prestholdt

Introduction

This chapter explores the socioeconomic and political reconfiguration of the Swahili world from the arrival of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean until the relocation of the Sultan of Oman-Zanzibar's capital to eastern Africa in the nineteenth century. The early modern period was one of upheaval and transition for Swahili-speakers. Swahili polities experienced sustained violence and most lost both economic and political autonomy. External powers aggressively pursued their interests in the Swahili world, which exacerbated local frictions and drew polities into multiple imperial spheres of interaction. Yet, Swahili-speakers to a degree shaped the social and economic networks of the era. New or expanded networks linked Swahili polities to other eastern African societies, regions well beyond the Indian Ocean basin and global intellectual currents. These, in turn, contributed to a Swahili cultural renaissance and altered social hierarchies in ways that would reverberate into the twentieth century.

Between the sixteenth and early nineteenth century Swahili polities, which included city-states, tributaries and smaller communities, struggled to maintain control of eastern Africa's interface with the Indian Ocean region. New transoceanic political spheres enveloped most Swahili polities. Portuguese aggression in the Indian Ocean forced Swahili polities into a colonial political matrix wherein Lisbon, Goa and local Portuguese officials shaped the political and economic lives of coastal residents. Portuguese colonial rule not only curtailed Swahili political autonomy, it also constrained economic activities and diminished the wealth of entrepôts such as Kilwa and Mombasa. However, local circumstances were never simply determined by the interests and actions of external states. Swahili engaged in new social and economic relationships beyond the control of

exogenous powers, while conflicts within and between Swahili polities dramatically altered the political landscape. Exogenous powers, including the Portuguese, Ottomans and Omanis, exploited these divisions to further their geopolitical interests, but the socioeconomic and political interests of Swahili-speakers likewise shaped the course and consequences of foreign interventions. Indeed, foreign and Swahili interests at times overlapped, and Swahili actors exerted influence as the confidants of foreign agents or conduits of new commercial relationships.

p.518

The Omani presence in eastern Africa would compromise Swahili control of the all-important continental–oceanic interface, limiting Swahili autonomy and contributing to the rise of Zanzibar as an entrepôt and seat of power under Omani Busaidi rule. The concentration of economic activity at Zanzibar reoriented the Swahili world, facilitating or strengthening ties with the African interior, southern Arabia, South Asia, Europe and the Americas. Since merchants from Muscat, Kutch, Gujarat and Bombay dominated these transoceanic networks, Zanzibari rule brought a definitive end to Swahili control of the continental–oceanic interface as well as the political autonomy of most Swahili polities. Nevertheless, Swahili polities maintained multifaceted, reciprocal relationships with their continental neighbours. Swahili-speakers also ventured well beyond the historical boundaries of the Indian Ocean. Intellectual and spiritual impulses from the Hadramawt and Oman impacted literacy, social relations and Islamic practice in the Swahili world (Bang, this volume). Interior societies pioneered routes to the coast. During the nineteenth century an unprecedented number of slaves of mainland origin integrated into coastal polities; in the process, they, along with other recent arrivals to the coast, affected local social hierarchies and the Swahili language.

Networks and frictions

As we see throughout this volume, Swahili polities occupied an advantageous position at the intersection of eastern African, Indian Ocean and Red Sea economic spheres. At the turn of the sixteenth century Swahili-speakers maintained networks of commercial and social relation facilitated by oceanic travel. These created a taut web of interaction within the ‘Swahili corridor’ from Barawa to Sofala, the Comoros Archipelago and northwest Madagascar (Horton and Middleton 2000). Rather than harnessing large-scale forms of production, powerful Swahili city-states such as Pate and Mombasa managed and profited from their favourable geographical position. Although such polities claimed little territory, they benefited greatly as conduits for eastern African consumer demands and extra-African demands for regional products.

Coastal residents travelled widely in the years before the Portuguese arrival and diverse

foreigners, from southern Arabia in particular, settled in Swahili polities. Merchants and sailors from Kilwa, Malindi and Mombasa established themselves in Madagascar, Cambay and at least as far as Malacca. Eastern African seafarers ventured south as well, perhaps even to the Western Cape (Pires 1944: 46–7; Pouwels 2002: 408; Vernet 2015). Thus, the Swahili language was spoken as far south as Inhambane in modern Mozambique (Theal 1964: 131). Swahili merchants maintained a significant presence along the Zambezi River and on Sofala Island, a gold emporium that paid tribute to the Sultan of Kilwa. To the west, Swahili merchants were scattered deep into the Sofalan hinterland and Zimbabwe plateau (Gregson 1973; Newitt 1995; ‘Relação’). On the northern coast, the larger polities of Kilwa, Mombasa, Malindi and Pate enjoyed regular and direct relations with both southeast Africa and distant Indian Ocean ports. The most economically important among these distant port cities were those of Gujarat in northwest India (Alpers 1976). Cambay, Diu and Surat supplied the Swahili world with the largest share of cloth, which was the most important category of imported goods and critical to local social and political relationships.

Throughout the early modern era Swahili polities placed a premium on commercial freedom and political autonomy (Vernet 2002: 109). Before the arrival of the Portuguese, a defining characteristic of the Swahili world was the open port (Sheriff 2010). Political elites collected customs, but ports, under the control of autonomous or tributary polities, were generally open to all. Ports served as re-export nodes for regional ivory, lumber, grains and other foodstuffs (Pouwels 2002). Politically, the coastal region was a patchwork of polities that maintained autonomous ‘spheres of jurisdiction’, as one Patean would later explain, and close relationships with mainland societies (Barendse 2009a: 115). Powerful city-states, such as Mombasa and Kilwa, demanded tribute from other Swahili polities and islands. These states also depended on the productive capacity of hinterland agricultural zones, including mainland economic partners (Vernet 2004). To facilitate such relationships, powerful city-states frequently themselves paid tribute – often in the form of cloth – to their mainland economic partners. Urbanites also produced goods of high value, from transoceanic vessels to cotton and silk textiles. For example, by unthreading Chinese and Gujarati silks, weavers in Pate maintained a supply of valuable silk thread from which they produced textiles celebrated throughout eastern Africa. Both women and men across the Swahili world wore Pate cloth. It found eager buyers as far away as the upper reaches of the Zambezi and later among Portuguese colonists. In the seventeenth century, Pate cloth was so popular in the south that Portuguese merchants found it difficult to conduct business on the Zambezi River without offering tribute in Pate goods to local rulers (Santos 1891: 380).

Swahili royal lineages often dominated the political sphere, but hereditary heads of state, both men and women, also belied a more diffuse political leadership. Councils or other civic bodies frequently decided succession disputes, and in early-eighteenth-century Pate

the sultan shared power with an assembly consisting of his relatives and other aristocrats, councillors and merchant elites (Barendse 2009a: 115). At Lamu a council of ward elders, or *Yumbe*, governed the city-state for much of the early modern era (Pouwels 1991: 372). Patricians frequently deposed hereditary heads of state as well. The wealth that a single merchant or upwardly mobile mercantile lineage could accrue through overseas trade empowered a substantial stratum of non-royal patricians to accumulate clientele and prestige, which they sometimes used to challenge hereditary rulers. Such power contests frequently turned violent. In this complex political milieu of transoceanic networks and political volatility, territorial identities had significant political salience. Both Swahili local histories and Portuguese observers recorded that while diverse foreigners integrated into Swahili polities, the local lineage of any political aspirant was a strong legitimating factor in claims to political power ('Arabic History': 85).

At the end of the fifteenth century, the fractured political landscape of the Swahili world militated against concerted resistance to Portuguese aggression. After the arrival of the Portuguese in 1498, most Swahili polities were attacked, looted and subjugated. While Swahili polities influenced and conquered their neighbours long before the early modern era, Europeans introduced novel forms of domination and exploitation: colonisation, trade monopolies and a pass system designed to regulate regional commerce. As elsewhere in the Indian Ocean region, Portuguese administrators sought either to gain the allegiance of larger Swahili polities or install client monarchs. In both instances they developed trade monopolies and extracted onerous tribute (Pearson 1998; Alpers 2014). Portuguese interests were both strategic and economic. Strategically, eastern Africa – Mozambique Island specifically – offered an important way-station on the road between Portugal and India. Mozambique Island's position was also opportune for Portuguese efforts to extract maximum wealth from eastern Africa. Ideally located just above the mouth of the Zambezi River and within the monsoon pattern, Portuguese administrators focused their energies on Mozambique and the gold trade. As a result, they initially neglected the northern Swahili world. When they did turn greater attention to northern polities in the late sixteenth century, Portuguese authorities concentrated on drawing revenue in the form of customs duties and tribute.

The Portuguese abolished the long-standing convention of the open port. Instead, they regulated commercial vessels through a pass system, which channelled trade to Portuguese customs houses and so generated revenue for the colonial administration. Additionally, the Portuguese Crown monopolised the trade in high-value items such as gold and ivory. Given the wealth generated by these two trades, the southern coast, Sofala and Mozambique specifically, remained the focus of Portuguese economic policy throughout the early modern period. While the Estado da Índia attempted to manipulate regional trade, to a great degree the Portuguese integrated into the pre-existing Indian Ocean economic system (Pearson 1998). More precisely, Portuguese factors depended on Gujarati textiles and Swahili merchants to secure gold and other African exports. Swahili merchants of

Kilwa and Sofala received cloth on credit, often by Luso-Indians, and took it far inland to the markets of Manyika, Butua, Tete and Sena. This collaboration with Swahili patricians encouraged lax commercial policy enforcement. When the punishment of Swahili merchant elites might damage Portuguese trade interests, Portuguese factors and captains often chose to overlook the commercial transgressions of coastal merchants (Silva da Rego 1962–1989, 2: 328).

p.520

Portuguese colonial rule reoriented the political landscape of the Swahili world. By the end of the sixteenth century nearly all Swahili polities were subject to a single political entity: the Portuguese Estado da Índia with its administrative centre in Goa. The Estado da Índia ruled through local elites, ideally pliable sultans of their choosing. Yet Swahili political leaders also influenced Portuguese colonial expansion. Malindi offers a case in point. After Vasco da Gama's bombardment of Mombasa in 1498, Malindi's patricians saw the Portuguese as potential allies in wresting the lucrative Gujarati trade from Mombasa. Thus, when Portuguese interlopers arrived at Malindi in the wake of the Mombasa attack, the city-state offered its assistance and allegiance. Thereafter, Malindians collaborated with Portuguese officials and drew upon Portuguese naval power to further their commercial interests. For example, at Malindi's request Portuguese officials ordered attacks on Angoche and Mombasa (Silva da Rego 1962–1989, 7: 133; Pearson 1998: 132). Through their alliance with the Portuguese, Malindians gained tribute in the form of foodstuffs from the island of Pemba, the region's principal supplier of rice. The Portuguese also built a customs house in Malindi, which ensured that the city received a greater share of regional commercial traffic. Most importantly, in the aftermath of the Ottoman attack on Mombasa (see below), the Estado da Índia granted the Malindian sultan the Mombasan throne, one-third of Mombasa's lucrative customs revenues and the honorific title Brother-in-Arms to the King of Portugal (Strandes 1961: 165).

Faza developed a close relationship with the Portuguese as well. The northern city-state rebelled against Portuguese tribute in the sixteenth century, but Fazans later turned to the Portuguese and Augustinian missionaries as a bulwark against powerful neighbours in the Lamu Archipelago. In 1606 the Sultan of Faza, Bwana Mufama Luvali, gave a 'considerable sum' for the construction of a Portuguese church and even 'carried on his shoulders stones and mortar' to build it. The Augustinians proved an expedient defence against regional aggressors. As the sultan explained, 'in the church I have walls which guard my city; and, in the Fathers, soldiers to defend it' (Freeman-Grenville 1974: 161–2). Luso-Swahili marriages also strengthened political and economic partnerships, though such unions were infrequent. The most famous marriage was that of Sultan Yusuf bin Hasan of Mombasa and Malindi – later renamed Dom Jerónimo Chingulia – to a Portuguese woman while in Goan exile (Prestholt 2001).

Yusuf bin Hasan's story additionally highlights ways in which Portuguese administrators

undermined their Swahili allies. Soon after the Malindian royal house gained the Mombasan throne, the Captain of Mombasa orchestrated the murder of Yusuf's father – a rash action based on rumours that he was planning a rebellion. Though a Portuguese tribunal later confirmed the deceased sultan's innocence, Yusuf was sent to Goa. There, missionaries groomed the young prince to become a malleable figurehead. On his return to Mombasa, Yusuf witnessed the restrictions placed upon even the most privileged Swahili leaders as well as the indignities they frequently suffered. Rights to customs duties and inherited honours could be quickly rescinded and overbearing Portuguese officials freely dispensed with Crown policies favourable to Swahili patricians. Therefore, in 1631, the sultan rebelled, renounced Christianity and reclaimed the name Yusuf bin Hasan. With Musungulo allies from the city's hinterland, Sultan Yusuf regained control of Mombasa and entreated all Christians to convert to Islam. 'Now we have our freedom and our law', he explained to a relative who was reluctant to give up Christianity (Freeman-Grenville 1980: 85). The rebellion soon spread well beyond Mombasa, but after appealing to the Ottomans and holding off a Portuguese counter-attack, Yusuf fled to Arabia and then to Pate, Madagascar and Ndzwani (Anjouan). As further conflict between Portuguese forces and multiple Swahili polities ensued, Yusuf bin Hasan retreated to the Red Sea where he likely perished (Strandes 1961: 169–71, 183–9; Mbuia-João 1990; Vernet 2005: 198–205).

p.521

Yusuf bin Hasan's overtures to the Ottoman Empire reveal another dimension of transoceanic relations in the early modern era. Specifically, Yusuf hoped that his request would encourage the Ottomans to reprise their assaults on Portuguese colonial possessions in East Africa. The Ottomans offered Sultan Yusuf little more than a flag, but Ottoman interest in East Africa was once much greater. In the 1580s the Swahili world became part of a renewed Ottoman geopolitical initiative that aimed in part to dismantle Portugal's Indian Ocean empire. With control of the Red Sea and a naval base in Yemen, Ottoman strategists in Mocha turned their attention to East Africa. Setting out from southern Arabia in early 1586, commander Mir Ali Beg travelled down the Swahili coast and gained the allegiance of most polities before returning to Yemen. Subsequent Portuguese reprisals encouraged several Swahili political leaders to send emissaries to Mocha requesting Ottoman military aid. When a second Ottoman fleet ventured down the Swahili coast it mounted an audacious assault on Mombasa. After capturing the city, Ottoman forces under Mir Ali Beg constructed a tower at the seafront and armed it with siege cannon. Yet, in a surprising turn of events, Zimba raiders allied with the Portuguese and forced the Ottomans from their stronghold. With the defeat of the Ottomans, Portuguese officials fortified Mombasa, completing the seemingly impregnable citadel of Fort Jesus in 1596 (Casale 2010: 163–78). The Portuguese presence across the Swahili world nevertheless remained minimal, and Portuguese military strength would depend on Swahili support for the next century.

While Swahili–Ottoman efforts to eject the Portuguese failed, Omani aid proved more

decisive. After a long and bitter war, Omanis regained Muscat from the Portuguese in 1650. Thereafter, Oman became an influential maritime power in its own right. This would have long-term repercussions for the Swahili world as several polities turned to Oman for assistance. In the second half of the seventeenth century, the Swahili coast became a central focus of Omani efforts, though Swahili leaders were not universally supportive of Omani military intervention. Indeed, as Thomas Vernet (2002) has shown, many political elites continued to assist the Portuguese Crown and this exacerbated tensions between Swahili polities. Pate provided a base for Omani operations, and the resulting alliance paid great dividends for the city-state. With the Omani intervention the Portuguese were expelled from the Lamu Archipelago and, from the 1660s, Pate dominated the northern coast. Additionally, Pate's ability to expand the trade in slaves from Madagascar and ivory from the northern mainland – the latter exported to Surat through Omani merchants – brought renewed prosperity to the city-state (Vernet 2002: 97, 2009: 47).

In the second half of the seventeenth century Swahili–Omani forces attacked Portuguese installations as far south as Mozambique Island and slowly regained much of the coast. This period of conflict culminated in the 1696 siege of Mombasa, the final Portuguese stronghold on the northern coast. The siege itself was a complicated affair that evidenced regional rivalries and Swahili efforts to control the continental–oceanic interface. Frustrated by Portuguese trade policies, a faction of Mombasan merchant elites and allied Mijikenda leaders orchestrated the siege with aid from a coalition of Omani, Patean, Bajuni, Somali and Galla militants. The defenders were likewise a diverse group that included Malindian, Fazan, Bajuni and other residents of Mombasa assisting a small Portuguese garrison. As the siege extended into 1697, command of Fort Jesus passed to a majority female militia under the leadership of a Fazan prince. But after nearly 33 months Mombasa fell to the combined Swahili–Omani forces (Freeman-Grenville 1980; Strandes 1961).

p.522

The end of Portuguese rule offered Omani strategists an entrée into the wider eastern African coastal region. Like earlier Portuguese administrators, Omanis sought both political power and economic access in East Africa. The Omani sultanate placed garrisons in Pate, Mombasa, Zanzibar and Kilwa. Soon, local Omani administrators such as the Mazrui dynasty in Mombasa exerted significant influence in commercial affairs. They gained unprecedented control over the trade in Gujarati cloth and ivory, while the sultanate embargoed towns that remained under Portuguese control. As with the Portuguese, Omani policies had the effect of limiting Swahili political autonomy and commercial freedom (Vernet 2002, 2005). At the turn of the eighteenth century, therefore, Swahili polities faced a familiar quandary. While some remained divided on the issue of Omani influence, Omani rule became a significant catalyst for regional cooperation. Where resentment ran highest, as in Kilwa, patricians turned to the

Portuguese for assistance. Ultimately, even Oman's erstwhile ally, the Sultan of Pate, petitioned Goa for armed intervention against the Omani garrisons. Oman was also wracked by internal conflict. Two decades of civil war between Yarubi and Busaidi lineages divided Oman and Omani Arab factions in eastern Africa (Vernet 2002: 102–8; Strandes 1961: 242–3). This insecurity and appeals to the Estado da Índia, which resulted in a treaty with Pate, occasioned a Portuguese return in 1728. However, the Portuguese soon broke the terms of the new treaty and were again ejected, this time without aid from Oman (Barendse 2009a: 119, 121–2). For the next three decades Swahili polities on the north coast maintained near complete political and commercial autonomy. But by the middle of the century this autonomy was again under attack. With the end of the Omani civil war in 1749 and the consolidation of Busaidi power in Oman, the sultanate turned its attention to the Swahili coast once again. Ultimately, the Busaidis' greatest investments would be made in the small island of Zanzibar (Bhacker 1992; Sheriff, this volume).

Autonomy and subjugation

Swahili polities under Portuguese and Omani rule struggled to maintain control of the all-important continental–oceanic interface. In the autonomous Comoros Islands different circumstances obtained. The islands were ideally situated to benefit from the shifting currents of global trade. The islands' position between markets in north-western Madagascar and the eastern African coast delivered great wealth to Comorian merchants who transhipped goods and slaves through the archipelago. Moreover, the Comoros Islands acted as emporiums for western Indian, southern Arabian, Persian Gulf and eastern African merchants (Anon 1789: 12; Jones 1807: 93; Ovington 1976: 51–2; Alpers 2001). From the mid-seventeenth century the Comoros also became a preferred refreshing station along the sea-lanes between Cape Town and Asian ports. Ndzwani in particular benefited from the needs of European merchant fleets. More precisely, new trade routes offered a lucrative vent for local and Madagascan produce such as meat, fruits, vegetables and grains. Patricians in Ndzwani delivered provisions to European ships at great profit and so began to reorient production for European vessels (Ross and Holtzappel 1986: 311).

p.523

In the early eighteenth century Ndzwanians forged a particularly strong relationship with English visitors. To appeal better to passing English merchantmen, Ndzwanians learned English, took English names and wore diverse English apparel. By the middle of the eighteenth century English was widely spoken in the island's largest town, Mutsamudu, and Ndzwanians had taken a keen interest in British geopolitics (Plumer 1769). English orientalist William Jones was astonished by the questions about world affairs put to him by Alawi, a member of the Ndzwanian royal house. Alawi queried Jones on the independence of the United States, 'the powers and resources of *Britain, France, Spain*, and

Holland, the character and supposed view of the Emperor; the comparative strength of the *Russian*, Imperial, and *Othman* [Ottoman] armies; and their respective modes of bringing their forces to action' (Jones 1807: 90). Much as Malindians courted the Portuguese and Pateans appealed to Omanis, Ndzwanians parlayed their business relationships with the English into multiple forms of assistance. Most important, Ndzwanians requested military aid. Threatened by Malagasy raids and a rebellion on neighbouring Mwali Island in the early nineteenth century, Ndzwanians received support both from British India and transiting English ships (Prior 1819: 54; Liszkowski 2000; Prestholdt 2007).

In Ndzwani and elsewhere in the Swahili world, migration from Oman, Hadramawt and other southern Arabian regions had substantial political, cultural and social impacts (Pouwels 2002). Southern Arabian male migrants usually married into Swahili lineages and so developed regional familial networks. In the process, they often gained social capital and prestige, though tensions with established lineages were not unusual. At Mombasa, the Mazrui family integrated into Swahili society and established hereditary control over both Mombasa and Pemba in the eighteenth century. After becoming effectively autonomous in the second half of the century, they resisted Busaidi suzerainty into the 1830s. Similar to the Mazruis, the Nabahani of Pate, patrilineal descendants of Omani immigrants who arrived in East Africa as early as the fifteenth century, drew on their commercial success and social capital to gain control of the sultanate in the late seventeenth century. Under Nabahani leadership, Pateans extended their influence beyond the Lamu Archipelago as far as the central Swahili coast (Tolmacheva 1993; Pouwels 2000; Vernet 2005). The eighteenth century was thus a period of renewed prosperity for Pate, Lamu and other northern cities as attested by elaborate coral construction, detailed plasterwork in mosques and homes, and voluminous imported porcelain (Horton and Middleton 2000).

Commerce and religious circuits often coincided and complemented each other. Pate, for instance, became a hub for learned religious figures, usually *sharif*, or descendants of the Prophet, hailing from the Hadramawt and Barawa (Brava). Pate was thus a crucial node linking the Arabian Sea, the southern Swahili coast and the Comoros (Pouwels 1987: 37–42; Vernet 2002, 2009; Bang 2003, this volume). Swahili interest in Hadrami intellectual currents encouraged religious scholars and healers to settle in many Swahili polities. Religious elites of Hadrami Alawi lineages such as the Jamal al-Layl founded branches of their Sufi order, the Alawiyya, across East Africa. They encouraged local literacy and scholarship, and so gained followers and prestige as far south as Ngazidja (Grande Comore). These groups affected both social practices and law. In some instances, they joined or even superseded royal lineages (Pouwels 2002: 419–22, 405). Moreover, the intellectual currents and wealth of the eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century northern coast contributed to a Swahili 'renaissance,' or period of remarkable cultural productivity (Allen 1990). It would, for instance, be the apex of classical Swahili poetry defined by the work of Patean and Mombasan poets such as Seyyid Ali bin Nassir (1720–1820), Mwana Kupona (d. 1865) and Muyaka bin Haji (1776–1840).

Omani political power and the influence of southern Arabian scholars also contributed to an increasing Arabisation of Swahili culture and language. Telling in this regard was the introduction of terminology that valorised Arab identity. The term *uungwana* was formerly used across the Swahili world to capture patrician ideals of the ‘civilised’ person, connoting one who was free and of local birth with an understanding of the cultural norms of urban life. However, in the nineteenth century this term was incrementally replaced with *ustaarabu*, literally Arabness. While the new term similarly connoted a free, urbane and thus ‘civilised’ person, it explicitly associated this ideal with Arab culture. For elites of immediate Arab descent in Zanzibar, possessing Arabness became a prestige claim that located ‘civilisation’ in Arab genealogies. After the Busaidi conquest of the coast, this ideal spread well beyond Zanzibar (Pouwels 1987, 2002).

p.524

Intellectual currents, fashion and changing social ideals evidenced Arab influences, but other trends affected Swahili society as well. For instance, mainland East Africans contributed greatly to regional economic expansion in the eighteenth century. New caravan routes pioneered by Maravi, Yao and other groups of the south-eastern interior linked the Lake Malawi region with the coast (Biginagwa and Mapunda, this volume). For example, beginning in the sixteenth century Yao traders pioneered new roads to the coast. They expanded these in the eighteenth century and so breathed new life into the Kilwa region. From the end of the century, Swahili also began to ply these routes. Though ivory would be eastern Africa’s most common high-value export, the early modern period saw an increase in cowrie exports from Zanzibar and Ndzwani and a burgeoning trade in slaves. Swahili merchants took a central role in the exportation of eastern African and Malagasy slaves. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Swahili, Arab and other merchants delivered Malagasy slaves to the East African coast and southern Arabia. In part, as a result of this demand for slaves, Pateans and others from the Lamu Archipelago settled in north-western Madagascar (Alpers 1975; Vernet 2009).

Though the slave trade from Madagascar declined in the eighteenth century, Omani demand for agricultural labour continued to rise and slave merchants turned to Kilwa. Demand at Kilwa would come from other quarters as well. The establishment of sugar and coffee plantations on the French islands of Mauritius and Réunion brought slave traders to Kilwa and further south to Mozambique Island. This trade was augmented by demand from Madagascar, Gujarat the Western Cape and Brazil. As slave-trading networks expanded well beyond earlier scales, Zanzibari elites likewise drew on this new market (Freeman-Grenville 1965; Alpers 1975; Hopper 2015). Direct trade between Mozambique Island and Makua-speaking northern Mozambique, and from Kilwa to Lake Malawi, acted as conveyer belts, bringing human captives and ivory to the coast and delivering consumer goods, notably Gujarati and Kutchi cloth, to the interior. In the context of the slave trade, Indian, Portuguese and Swahili merchants managed eastern Africa’s increasingly complex interface with distant world regions and societies, from Oman and western India to

Zanzibar, Reunion, Cape Town and Brazil (Sheriff 1987; Alpers 2005; Allen 2008).

Indian capital and commercial relations with western India would stimulate the regional economy, encourage greater migration and cement Busaidi rule at Zanzibar. Indian cloth merchants, particularly Gujarati Vaniya from Diu and Daman, negotiated the continental–oceanic interface. As Pedro Machado (2009, 2014) demonstrated for the southern Swahili coast and Portuguese Mozambique in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Gujarati Vaniya cloth merchants, with information supplied by local interlocutors, regularly relayed shifts in African demand to manufacturers in Gujarat. Weavers then made adjustments to cloth designs and sent the desired articles the following trading season. Indian capital from Kutchi and other sources underpinned Busaidi commercial interests as well. From the late eighteenth century the Busaidi Sultan of Oman began more fully to exploit economic opportunities in eastern Africa. Zanzibar became the commercial hub of the Busaidis (Sheriff 1987). Just as important, enterprising regional traders seeking cloth, beads and brass wire pioneered caravan routes to the coast. As Stephen Rockel (2006) has shown, Nyamwezi merchants expanded an older trade in salt and iron across central Tanzania to include the Swahili towns of the central coast. By the early nineteenth century, Nyamwezi and others facilitated vast networks of exchange linking the Lakes Region and the Indian Ocean littoral.

p.525

Sultan Seyyid Said extended the Oman–Zanzibari sultanate across most of the Swahili world, developing an alliance with Lamu’s patricians and taking the last major polity, Mazrui-controlled Mombasa, in 1837 (Pouwels 1991). The new sultan marginalised hereditary rulers, including Zanzibar’s Mwinyi Mkuu, and installed Busaidi governors (*liwali*) in each principal Swahili city. As the Busaidis consolidated their control, the sultan banned many foreign merchants from direct trade with mainland ports. At the same time, he made Zanzibar a free port and attracted regional trade and investment. Zanzibar-based firms, most of which were subsidiaries of western Indian financial houses, began offering generous lines of credit, which brought more cash into circulation, fuelled coastal trading ventures to the interior, and stimulated agricultural production for export. In an effort to expand clove production on Zanzibar and Pemba, in the early decades of the nineteenth century Zanzibaris imported unprecedented numbers of slaves from the mainland. By 1840 Zanzibar exported its first significant cargoes of cloves. Urban Zanzibaris imported slaves as well, including domestic slaves from as far afield as Ethiopia, India and the Caucasus. Thus, in the first half of the nineteenth century, Zanzibar’s slave population grew exponentially, and as diverse newcomers, both enslaved and free, altered Zanzibar’s demographics, an increasingly rigid social hierarchy defined social relations (Cooper 1977; Sheriff 1987; Prestholdt 2008).

The Busaidis developed new global trade initiatives in the nineteenth century. Sultan Seyyid Said sent vessels to Bombay, Canton, London and Marseilles. In 1840 he sent his

flagship, the *Sultana*, on a trade mission to New York City laden with Zanzibari cloves, eastern African ivory, Yemeni coffee, Omani dates and Persian carpets. As Zanzibar became the entrepôt of eastern Africa, the sultan moved his court from Muscat to the island. Zanzibar's economic vitality similarly attracted seasonal and permanent migrants from other Swahili cities, the Comoros, Madagascar, southern Arabia, Kutch, Gujarat, Bombay and elsewhere. The Busaidis instituted unprecedented religious freedoms at Zanzibar. As a result, the island became a centre for both Sunni and Ibadi scholarship (Bang 2003; Ghazal 2010). Finally, southern Arabians, mainland Africans and other recent arrivals to Zanzibar relied on Swahili as a lingua franca (Ruede 1993). As new residents took on the language and other elements of coastal culture, the Swahili spoken at Zanzibar (*Kiunguja*) incorporated new loanwords, notably from Arabic. While in earlier centuries the language was rarely spoken beyond the coast and the lower Zambezi Valley, the rapid expansion of caravan highways between the lakes and coastal polities would make Swahili an important language of regional exchange in the nineteenth century.

Conclusion

The fall of Mombasa in 1837 and the arrival of the sultan's court in Zanzibar marked the end of Swahili political and commercial autonomy. Foreign intervention and regional contests for position defined the early modern period as one of shifting allegiances and recurring conflict. The Swahili world was a battleground among the expansionist states of Portugal, the Ottoman Empire and Oman. At the same time, Swahili political elites used foreign powers to leverage factional interests and maintain some degree of control over the continental–oceanic interface. Malindi's elite entreated the Portuguese for assistance, Mombasans turned to the Ottoman navy, Pateans appealed to the Sultan of Oman and Ndzwanians petitioned the British Crown. Yet, such efforts met with mixed results. While some Swahili elites profited from relationships with exogenous powers, Portuguese commercial restrictions taxed Swahili polities and Omani administrators developed self-interested trade policies.

p.526

As other political entities absorbed Swahili polities, the ability of Swahili actors to control the continental–oceanic interface foundered. Indeed, while Swahili polities continued to integrate diverse foreigners, the rough seas of the early modern era rendered the Swahili world of the early nineteenth century far different from that of the fifteenth century. It would no longer be a series of independent polities but rather a patchwork of cities under the sovereignty of an exogenous monarch. Swahili-speakers were integrated into the economic currents of a fully global marketplace, affecting and affected by new interfaces but constrained by the economic dictates of a powerful state. This pattern would continue in the modern era as European colonial states and postcolonial nations dominated

Swahili polities. In most cases, these entities negotiated regional–global interfaces with minimal regard for Swahili interests. Yet, even as Swahili polities lost their struggle to maintain control of eastern Africa’s continental–oceanic interface, the Swahili world of the nineteenth and early twentieth century continued to integrate diverse migrants and radiate new cultural trends, perhaps to a greater degree than ever before.

References

- Allen, J. de V. 1990. ‘Swahili culture reconsidered: some historical implications of the material culture of the northern Kenya coast in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries’. *Azania* 9 (1): 105–38.
- Allen, R. B. 2008. ‘The constant demand of the French: the Mascarene slave trade and the worlds of the Indian Ocean and Atlantic during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries’. *The Journal of African History* 49 (1): 43–72.
- Alpers, E. A. 1975. *Ivory and Slaves: Changing Pattern of International Trade in East Central Africa to the Later Nineteenth Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Alpers, E. A. 1976. ‘Gujarat and the trade of East Africa, 1500–1800’. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 9 (1): 22–44.
- Alpers, E. A. 2001. ‘A complex relationship: Mozambique and the Comoro Islands in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries’. *Cahiers d’Études Africaines* 161: 73–95.
- Alpers E. A. 2005. ‘Mozambique and “Mozambiques”: slave trade and diaspora on a global scale’. In *Slave Routes and Oral Tradition in Southeastern Africa*, edited by B. Zimba, E. Alpers and A. Isaacman, 39–61. Maputo: Filsom Entertainment.
- Alpers, E. A. 2014. *The Indian Ocean in World History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Anon 1789. *A Letter to a Gentleman on Board an Indianman to His Friend in London giving an Account of the Island of Johanna in the Year 1784*. London: John Stockdale.
- ‘Arabic history of Kilwa, c. 1520’, 1974. In *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the First to the Earlier Nineteenth Century*, edited by G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville. London: Rex Collings.
- Bang, A. K. 2003. *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea: Family Networks in East Africa, 1860–1925*. London: Routledge Curzon.
- Barendse, R. J. 2009a. *Arabian Seas, 1700–1763, Volume 1: The Western Indian Ocean in the Eighteenth Century*. Boston: Brill.
- Barendse, R. J. 2009b. *Arabian Seas, 1700–1763, Volume 3: Men and Merchandise*. Boston: Brill.
- Barros, J. de. 1945. *Ásia: Dos Feitos que os Portugueses fizeram no descobrimento e conquista dos Mares e Terras do Oriente*, 4 Vols. Lisboa.
- Bhacker, M. R. 1992. *Trade and Empire in Muscat and Zanzibar: Roots of British Domination*.

London: Routledge.

Casale, G. 2010. *The Ottoman Age of Exploration*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cooper, F. 1977. *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. (Ed.) 1965. *The French at Kilwa Island: An Episode in Eighteenth-Century East African History*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. (Ed.) 1974. *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the First to the Earlier Nineteenth Century*. London: Rex Collings.

Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. (Ed.) 1980. *Mombasa Rising Against the Portuguese 1631: From Sworn Evidence*. London: British Academy.

p.527

Ghazal, A. N. 2010. *Islamic Reform and Arab Nationalism: Expanding the Crescent from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean 1880s–1930s*. London: Routledge.

Gregson, R. 1973. 'Trade and politics in south-east Africa: the Moors, the Portuguese, and the Kingdom of Mwenemutapa'. *African Social Research* 16: 413–43.

Hopper, M. S. 2015. *Slaves of One Master: Globalization and Slavery in Arabia in the Age of Empire*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Horton, M. C. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Jones, W. 1807. 'Remarks on the Island of Hinzuan, or Johanna'. *Asiatick Researches*, 5.

Liszkowski, H. 2000. *Mayotte et les Comores: Escalles sur le route des Indes au XVe du XVIIIe siècles*. Mamoudzou: Editions du Baobab.

Machado, P. 2009. 'Cloths of a new fashion: networks of exchange, African consumerism and cloth zones of contact in India and the Indian Ocean in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries'. In *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500–1850*, edited by G. Riello and R. Tirthankar, 53–84. Leiden: Brill.

Machado, P. 2014. *Ocean of Trade: South Asian Merchants, Africa and the Indian Ocean, c. 1750–1850*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mbuia-João, J. 1990. 'The revolt of Dom Jeronimo Chingulia of Mombasa, 1590–1637'. PhD diss., Catholic University of America.

Newitt, M. 1995. *A History of Mozambique*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Ovington, J. 1976. 'A voyage to Suratt in the year 1689'. In *India in the Seventeenth Century*, Vol. 1, edited by J. P. Guha. New Delhi: Associated Publishing House.

Pearson, M. N. 1998. *Port Cities and Intruders: The Swahili Coast, India, and Portugal in the Early Modern Era*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Pires, T. 1944. *Suma Oriental*. London.

Plumer, K. 1769. 'Journal of a voyage from London to Madras'. MS Bell Library,

University of Minnesota.

- Pouwels, R. 1987. *Horn and Crescent: Cultural Change and Traditional Islam on the East African Coast, 800–1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pouwels, R. 1991. 'The Battle of Shela: the climax of an era and a point of departure in the modern history of the Kenya Coast'. *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 31 (123): 363–89.
- Pouwels, R. 1993. 'Reflections on historiography and pre-nineteenth century history from the Pate "Chronicles"'. *History in Africa* 20: 263–96.
- Pouwels, R. 2002. 'Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean to 1800: reviewing relations in historical perspective'. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35 (2/3): 385–425.
- Prestholdt, J. 2001. 'Portuguese conceptual categories and the "other" encounter on the Swahili coast'. *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 36 (4): 383–92.
- Prestholdt, J. 2007. 'Similitude and empire: on Comorian strategies of Englishness'. *Journal of World History* 18 (2): 113–38.
- Prestholdt, J. 2008. *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Prior, J. 1819. *Voyage along the Eastern Coast of Africa, to Mosambique, Johanna, and Quiloa; to St. Helena . . . in the Nisus Frigate*. London: Sir Richard Phillips and Co.
- 'Relação (cópia), feita pelo Padre Francisco de Monclaro, da Companhia de Jesus, da Expedição ao Monomotapa, Comandada por Francisco Barreto, 1573'. In *Documentos sobre os Portugueses em Moçambique e na África Central, Vol. 8*, edited by E. Silva da Rego, 324–428. Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Historicos Ultramarinos.
- Rockel, S. 2006. *Carriers of Culture: Labor on the Road in Nineteenth-Century East Africa*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Ross, R. and Holtzappel, F. G. 1986. 'The Dutch on the Swahili Coast, 1776–1778: two slaving journals, part I'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 19 (2): 305–60.
- Ruete, E. [S. Salme] 1993. *An Arabian Princess Between Two Worlds: Memoirs, Letters Home, Sequels to the Memoirs, and Syrian Customs and Usages*, edited by E. van Donzel. New York: Brill.
- Santos, J dos. 1891. *Ethiopia Oriental*, Vol. 1. Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Historicos Ultramarinos.
- Sheriff, A. 1987. *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar: Integration of an East African Commercial Empire into the World Economy, 1770–1873*. London: James Currey.
- Sheriff, A. 2010. *Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean: Cosmopolitanism, Commerce, and Islam*. New York: Columbia University Press.

- Central*, Vols 1–9. Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Historicos Ultramarinos.
- Sousa, Fr. J. de 1790. *Documentos Arabicos para Historia Portugueza copiados dos originaes da Torre do Tombo*. Lisbon.
- Strandes, J. 1961. *The Portuguese Period in East Africa*. Nairobi: East Africa Publishing House.
- Theal, G. M. (Ed.) 1964. *Records of South-Eastern Africa, Vol. 2*. Cape Town.
- Tolmacheva, M. (Ed.) 1993. *The Pate Chronicle*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.
- Vernet, T. 2002. 'Les cités-états Swahili et la puissance omanaise, 1650–1720'. *Journal des africanistes* 72 (2): 89–110.
- Vernet, T. 2004. 'Le territoire hors les murs des cités-états Swahili de l'archipel de Lamu, 1600–1800'. *Journal des africanistes* 74 (1/2): 381–411.
- Vernet, T. 2005. 'Les cités-états Swahili de l'archipel de Lamu, 1585–1810. Dynamiques endogènes, dynamiques exogènes'. PhD diss., Centre de Recherches Africaines, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne.
- Vernet, T. 2009. 'Slave trade and slavery on the Swahili coast (1500–1750)'. *Slavery, Islam and Diaspora*, edited by B. A. Mirzai, I. M. Montana and P. Lovejoy, 37–76. Trenton: Africa World Press.
- Vernet, T. 2015. 'East African travelers and traders in the Indian Ocean: Swahili ships, Swahili mobilities ca. 1500–1800'. In *Trade, Circulation, and Flow in the Indian Ocean World*, edited by M. Pearson, 167–202. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

46

ZANZIBAR OLD TOWN

Abdul Sheriff

Introduction

Zanzibar Town is located at the geographical centre of the Swahili coast, an heir to ‘a distinctive urban tradition that is over a thousand years old’ (Ghaidan 1976: ix). It developed at the interface between the continental world of Africa and the maritime world of the Indian Ocean. This culture has therefore been distinctly urban, mercantile and cosmopolitan, participating in an extensive world of the Indian Ocean as well as Africa. However, it was given an enormous boost during the nineteenth century by the expansion of commerce that encompassed not only the Indian Ocean but also the Atlantic, and with the deepest commercial and cultural links as far as the Great Lakes. Thus, it was the largest and most successful Swahili city-state, controlling the whole Swahili coastline from the Benadir in southern Somalia to northern Mozambique, and the trade of a vast region of the African interior.

Middleton (1992: 35, 54, 57) argued that the basic social unit of the Swahili was the town (*Mji*) of two ‘ideal types’ at opposite ends of a continuum: (i) ‘stone-towns’, inhabited by merchants, and (ii) ‘country-towns’ inhabited by farmers and fishermen. However, as Allen (1974: 111, 1977) has argued, there is no such thing as a stone town inhabited by *waungwana* (free men) patricians, which was not surrounded by earth and thatch buildings inhabited by non-*waungwana*. Stone towns without earth and thatch houses made no sense. This description has been interpreted as a spatial division of every Swahili town occupied by distinct social and ethnic groups, often taking Zanzibar Town in the 1950s as a definitive example (Myers 1995: 30). ‘Stone town’ is not a Swahili concept, and it began to be used only since the mid-1980s when Zanzibar was applying for UNESCO World Heritage status. In Swahili it is known as *‘Mji Mkongwe’* (Old Town). In this chapter, therefore, we will not be confined to the ‘Stone Town’ as defined by UNESCO, but the entire Old Town, which includes Ng’ambo, ‘the Other Side’, which developed as the ‘native quarter’ during the colonial period.

A Swahili town

Zanzibar Old Town is located on a triangular peninsula that was separated from the main island to the east by a creek, and connected by a narrow neck of land at Mnazi Mmoja in the south. It was occupied from as early as the tenth century by fishermen, but was later transformed into a typical Swahili town based on local agriculture, crafts, fishing and maritime trade. By the end of the sixteenth century it was under the rule of a local dynasty of the Mwenyi Mkuu, who claimed a Sharifian Hadrami origin as in many other Swahili towns. The reigning Queen Fatuma was married to Sultan of Utundwe on the opposite mainland, and had her palace on the site of the present-day House of Wonders and the Old Fort. The Portuguese who had entered the Indian Ocean at the end of the fifteenth century had built a small 'factory' and a chapel next door. However, they were expelled from the coast by the newly regenerated Oman in 1699. They partially demolished the chapel and incorporated it in the construction of what was described in 1710 as 'a ridiculous little fort', which forms part of the existing Old Fort, one of the oldest standing landmarks in the town (Gray 1962: 38, 41, 46, 52).

p.530

The queen, who was allied to the Portuguese, was exiled to Oman but was allowed to resume her throne in 1709. The town began to grow after 1728 under her son Hasan, who began to clear the bush, and it was settled also by Swahili immigrants from the Lamu Archipelago, such as the Mafazi from Pate and the Shatiri from Mafia who were related to the Mwenyi Mkuu (Pearce 1920: 186; Gray 1962: 86–7). As in the case of other Swahili towns, Zanzibar Town may have been sub-divided into wards (Sw. *mitaa*) that originally reflected their origin, ethnic or kin affinities, or named after landmark trees or personalities, such as Malindi or Mkunazini (jujube tree). The different quarters of the town were not segregated, but, rather, bound together by an intricate network of intimate narrow lanes and social nodes, such as coffee places and *barazas* (benches). For a society that has been Islamic for nearly a thousand years, every *mtaa* centred on a neighbourhood mosque and every town contained one or more Friday congregational mosques.

Swahili architecture is a synthesis of the building and architectural traditions of the Swahili people based on the use of local raw materials, especially coral rag, lime, mangrove poles and thatch (*makuti*); to build in stone as had developed along the coast over a thousand years ago as shown at Shanga; and the Swahili door-carving tradition which goes back at least five centuries as reported by the early Portuguese visitors (Horton 1987: 86–93; Aldrick 1990). Important qualities of architecture along the Swahili coast, derived perhaps from its mercantile vocation and Islamic creed, were modesty, hospitality and privacy. The Swahili house (*jumba*) was outwardly very plain so as not to excite envy and to generate good neighbourliness, and the only external feature to mark individual taste, affluence or social position of the house-owner was perhaps the carved door. However, for

a mercantile community hospitality was an important element, to provide a special space for reception of guests (*daka*, *baraza*, *majlis*) – while for a Muslim society, privacy of the household was paramount, to protect the respect (*heshima*) of the women of the household, giving it a distinct introverted character (Körner 2001: 17). While few traditional Swahili houses such as those in Lamu have survived in Zanzibar, these three qualities – outward plainness, provision of hospitality and introversion vis-à-vis the women in the household – permeate architecture in Zanzibar Old Town generally.

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century Zanzibar was a typical Swahili town. As late as 1811, it was still ‘composed chiefly of cajan huts’, although there were also ‘a good number of stone buildings in it belonging to the Arabs and merchants’ (Smee as quoted in Burton 1872: Vol. 2: 490). During the nineteenth century it went through a major economic transformation. Only a few Swahili architectural features have survived to the present, especially, for example, the telltale *daka* entrance to the Kiponda Hotel and the covered passages above street level connecting buildings in the Omani palace complex.

However, the tradition has survived in a modified form in what is now known as the Swahili house. From the entrance porch, with a raised platform on one side where minor trading or artisanal work was carried out, a corridor with rooms on both sides led to the open courtyard at the back of the house where many household chores took place. Originally earth and thatch houses, many were later transformed into stone and plaster houses with corrugated iron sheet roofs, some of which can still be found on the peninsula but are more widespread in Ng’ambo (Myers 1995: 39).

p.531

Zanzibar as the capital of a commercial empire

In the nineteenth century Zanzibar went through a major economic transformation that came to rest on the twin foundations of a clove plantation economy and commerce, and developed as a centre of trade and diplomacy for the whole of eastern Africa. It had been primarily dependent on trade across the Indian Ocean, but Napoleonic wars culminating in the British conquest of Mauritius in 1810 and the prohibition of slave trade to the Mascarenes in 1822, suddenly pulled the rug from under an important sector of Zanzibar’s trade. In an effort to make up for the loss of this lucrative market, Zanzibari merchants turned to production and export of cloves.

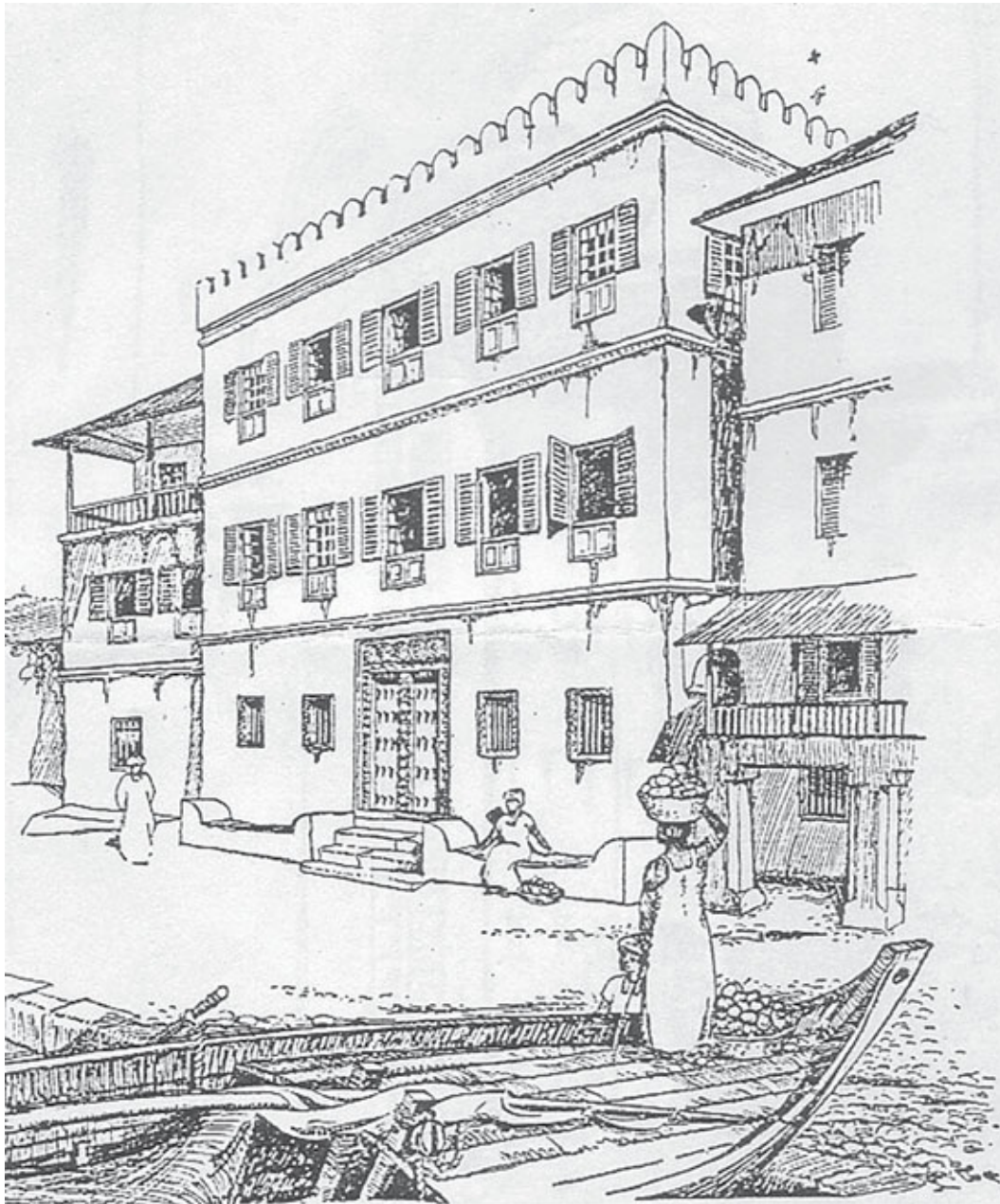
Cloves were introduced in c.1810, but Sultan Seyyid Said gave the industry a big push during his visit to Zanzibar in 1828 when he encouraged his subjects to plant the lucrative spice. By the 1830s a French visitor described a ‘clove mania’ that was then raging, as people cleared forests to plant the spice tree using slave labour. The Omani Arabs who were to emerge as the new landowning class, who had numbered 1,000 in

1818, rose to 5,000 by the 1840s. They built plantation houses on their farms, but the richest wanted to maintain their influence at the sultan's court by building mansions in Zanzibar Town around the palace complex and to catch the breeze (Sheriff 1987: 137–50).

The Omanis came with their own ideas about an ideal *beyt* (home), although using local artisans and building technology based on locally available building materials, and displaying elegant simplicity. They had come from a dry desert country with a troubled history of frequent inter-tribal warfare. Their *beyt* was therefore a free-standing whitewashed square fortress, with a flat roof surmounted by a low crenulated wall, from where the occupants could defend themselves with bows and arrows or muskets. The roofscape of Zanzibar during the nineteenth century was therefore remarkably flat. Entrance was through only a couple of doors, and windows on the ground floor were heavily grilled. The courtyard was a functional area to carry out household chores such as washing clothes or cooking, and the rooms on the ground floor were used as slave quarters or for storage of merchandise (Sykes 1853: 106; Burton 1872: Vol. 1: 85; Sheriff 1987: 146, 1998: 21–31).

Like the Swahili house (Gensheimer, Meier, this volume) the Omani home was an introverted structure influenced by the Islamic concept of privacy, but it was expressed in a spiral of intimacy from the most public ground floor to the most private upper floors. It had long rooms along the four sides, enclosing a courtyard at the centre that was open to the sky, providing light and ventilation to the rooms. The domestic quarters on the upper floors were restricted to members of the family, with small windows and wooden louver shutters that allowed in ventilation and light without exposing the occupants to the outside. On the other hand, there were broad inner verandas around the central funnel, where the female members of the household could carry out their household chores in privacy.

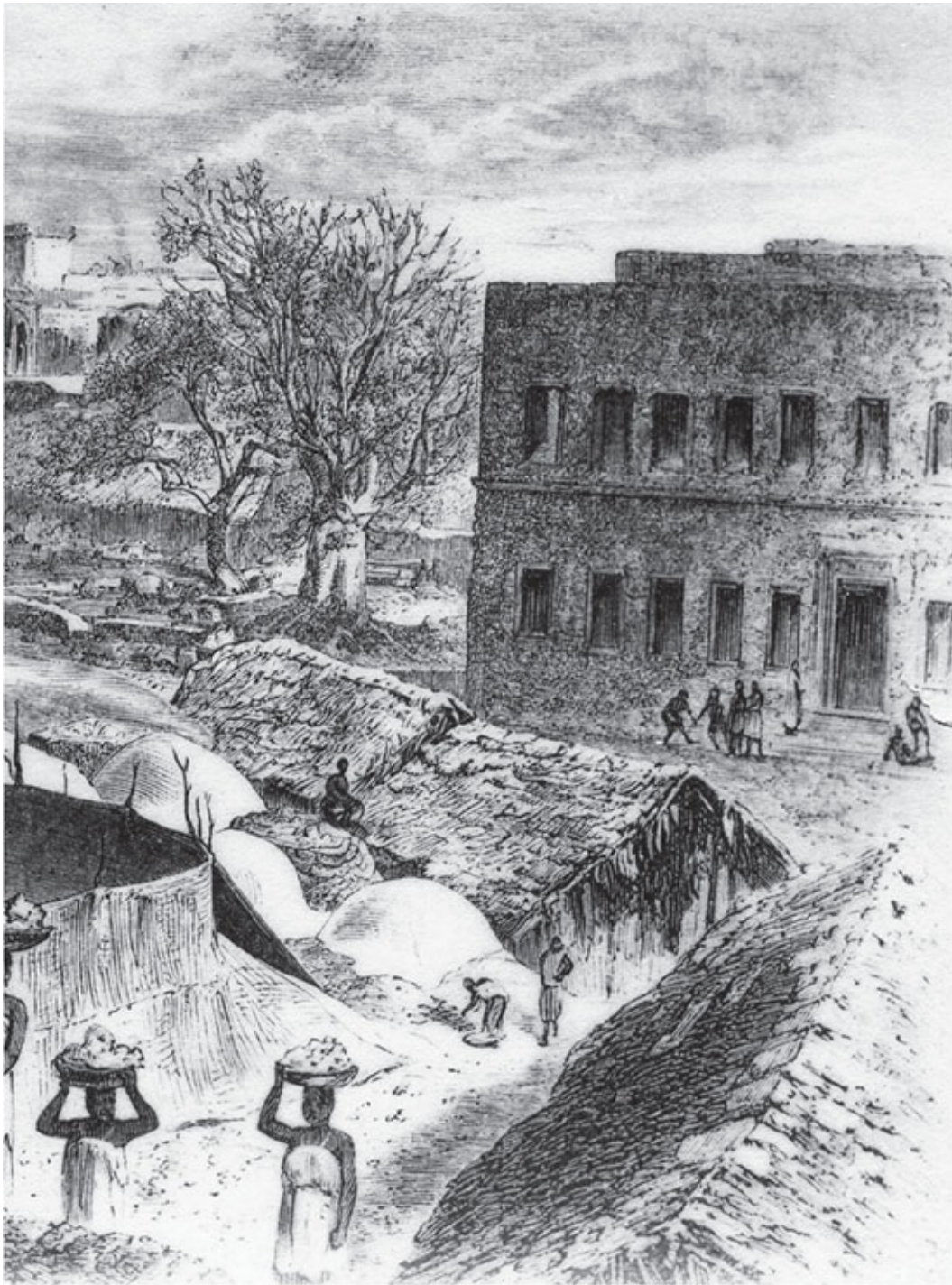
The new landlord class placed great emphasis on graded social interaction that consolidated social cohesion. At the entrance most of these houses had stone *baraza* on either side of the carved door where the house owner could meet passers-by for casual talk. Inside the building there was another porch, *sebule*, with stone benches that served as a seating area for casual visitors, servants or slaves who may have come to the house on an errand. On the other side, slightly raised above ground level, was the *majlis* where the house owner received members of his own clan and friends for conversation and a cup of coffee and sweetmeat daily and/or on festive occasions.



[Figure 46.1a](#) Omani beyt (Harris 1925)



[*Figure 46.1b*](#) Zanzibar, door (A. Sheriff)



[*Figure 46.1c*](#) Lime burning near the Old Fort (Zanzibar Archives, AV29.9)

These houses were very plain and modest on the outside, like Swahili houses, except for the square-framed door that was intricately carved with geometric designs. This was an outgrowth of the old Swahili tradition of door carving, but during the nineteenth century there was an enormous development in the size and decoration as a result of the wealth that had begun to flow in from clove plantations. Its size became a mark of the social status and wealth of the owner. As Burton (1872: Vol. 1: 86) put it: ‘The higher the tenement, the bigger the gateway, the heavier the padlock, and the huger the iron studs which nail the door of heavy timber, the greater is the owner’s dignity’.

Many of the landowners belonged to the minority Ibadi denomination, and by 1866 there were nine Ibadi mosques scattered in the western and southern half of the town. They were characterised by the absence of a projecting *kibla* (prayer niche), such as at the Sd. Humoud mosque at Mizingani. With population shifts over the past century, some of them have been converted to Sunni mosques and their features sometimes modified, such as the Bushir mosque near Mambo Msiige (Sheriff 1995b: 60).

p.534

The second sector of the economy was commerce. At the beginning of the nineteenth century it was still largely confined to the Indian Ocean. However, from the 1820s a whole new world of the Atlantic region was opened up by entrepreneurial American traders, soon to be joined by British, French and German traders who settled along the seafront. Harkema (1967: 19) suggests that Zanzibar in the nineteenth century was in transition from its monsoon phase to a wider international one, with the expansion of its mercantile foreland to include Europe and North America. According to the commercial treaties signed between the Sultan of Zanzibar and these countries, their trade was confined to Zanzibar. So they had to depend on a large class of Arab, Swahili and Indian traders who were involved in the trade with Arabia and India, along the Swahili coast from the Benadir to Madagascar, and along the caravan routes deep into the interior as far as the Congo. This transit trade provided profit to the Zanzibar state as well as to resident merchants, including Indians, who began to invest in its infrastructure. The rent of the customs, farmed out to Arab and later Indian merchants, increased nearly fourfold between 1819 and the 1860s (Sheriff 1987: 140).



[Figure 46.2](#) Malindi Minaret Mosque (Decken 1869–1879)

The mosque tradition closely associated with the Sunni Swahili and Arab traders was the Shafe'i school, with wide-ranging socio-cultural contacts from Hadhramaut in the north to the Comoros in the south and across the Indian Ocean. The earliest surviving mosque is the 'Mnara' mosque close to the dhow port, rebuilt in 1834/5 by Muhammad b. Abdulkadir al-Mansaby who hailed from the Benadir Coast. However, the elliptical minaret attached to it may go back to the seventeenth century (Burton 1872: Vol. 1: 84; Trimingham 1964: 84; Horton and Clark 1985: 16; Sheriff 1987: 54, 98, 104, 120). The rest of the Sunni mosques were concentrated in the older part of the town in the centre of the peninsula, gradually extending eastwards towards the creek and to Ng'ambo. In common with other mosques in the Old Town, these mosques are fairly plain on the outside, hardly distinguishable from domestic buildings, although they were sometimes more decorated, especially around the protruding *mihrab*.

As the century progressed, however, Arab and Swahili traders were overtaken but never entirely replaced by Indian merchants, although they remained dominant in coastal and caravan trade. Indian traders began their careers as modest traders. Some of them were initially ‘birds of passage’, coming as bachelors who lived in large dormitories (*maras* or *chawls*). They tended to invest their profits to expand the scale of their businesses rather than on conspicuous consumption and buildings. Most of their residences were therefore plain and functional, exhibiting mercantile modesty. They built their simple shop-front houses with narrow shops opening onto the bazaar streets radiating behind Customs and the Old Fort. They were described as ‘mere holes raised a foot or two above the street’ (Ruschenberger 1838: 42). As they prospered they added a second floor where living quarters were moved, while a small side door led to the domestic quarters at the back of the house or on the first floor (*uppar makan*, *niche dukan* – ‘home above, shop below’). To provide greater ventilation and light along these narrow streets, some houses added balconies overhanging their shops. Their doors were of the simple Gujarati-folding type made of solid wood with cross bars, which exposed the whole front of their houses to customers, but with very little if any carving (Sheriff 1998: 33–43).

During the half-century between 1819 and the 1870s the numbers of Indian traders increased 15-fold to 3,000, and they began to settle more permanently. While high-caste Hindus were prevented by their religious beliefs from bringing their wives until the 1860s, Muslim Indians began to settle down earlier. In the 1840s there were only 26 married women in 165 Khoja (Shi’a Muslim) households, but by the 1870s there were 700 females in 500 households, in a total population of over 2,000 (Frere 1873; Christie 1876: 336–8, 345, 383; Sheriff 1987: 146–7).

However, not all Indians were small shopkeepers. Some half-dozen were wealthy wholesale merchants who had begun by the 1840s to build ‘large and commodious residences’. Some acquired or built Omani-type houses, and others built their Gujarati *haweli* houses including intricately carved wooden balconies, and windows with semi-circular lintels and coloured glass to increase ventilation and light, such as the house of the Custom Master Jairam Sewji. By 1860, whole new quarters were being established in various parts of the town inhabited by different communities around their multi-purpose, religious complexes that reflected both their spiritual and social characters, such as the ornately decorated Hanafi Mosque, and by 1866 there were three Shi’a mosques as well in Zanzibar Town (Sheriff 1987: 146, 148; Harkema 1967: 131).

The Omani and Indian traditions came together in a crescendo of architectural flowering during the reign of Sultan Barghash (1870–88). He embarked on a programme of construction of palaces, *hamams* (Turkish baths), and even provision of piped water and electricity to the Zanzibar seafront as early as the 1880s. There was a heavy Indian influence on buildings with external verandas, and an Indian carpenter carved the huge doors with semi-circular lintels, floral design and even animals, and with pointed brass studs for the House of Wonders. They were copied by many rich Arab landowners

building their mansions in the Baghani quarter, minus the animals prohibited by Islam. Barghash was joined by one of the richest Indian merchants, who brought an Indian architect to build the Old Dispensary along the seafront as a hospital. The front of the building consists of two stories of broad balconies jutting out with a full view of the sea, and the ceiling of the dining room on the second floor has a hook to hang a chandelier (Battle 1995: 91–9).

p.536



[*Figure 46.3a*](#) House of Wonders (Zuhair Sheriff)



The 'native quarter' and Ng'ambo

Zanzibar, however, was not merely a town of landowners and traders. There was a large working class connected primarily with the commercial economy of the port. An estimated 10,000 to 15,000 day-labourers presented themselves daily at the customhouse or business houses to clean gum copal, orchilla weed or copra, professional *hamalis* (porters, transporters), artisans, fishermen, etc. Some were poor Hadrami Arabs and others were slaves owned by labour contractors who often lived with their slaves (Sheriff 1995a: 26; Lanchester 1923: 15).

p.537

It needs to be emphasised that during the nineteenth century, the so-called 'native quarter' existed on the peninsula itself on which the so-called 'Stone Town' is now located. The earliest descriptions of the town at the beginning of the nineteenth century mentioned only a few stone houses along the seafront, the rest being huts of straw. In Guillain's map of 1846, while the central part of the peninsula was described as consisting 'generally' of stone houses, the northern and southern parts were still covered by earthen houses. Leigh (Leigh and Kirkman 1980: 292–3, 493, 499) records fires that destroyed several huts in 1838–39 near the Old Fort, in the prestigious Shangani quarter and in the southern part of the town in Mtakuja. As Burton (1872: Vol. 1: 96–7), who visited the town in 1857 put it, in his characteristic pungent style, the stone houses provided only a facade: 'At both flanks of the city, is the native town . . . The meanest hovels are of palm-matting . . . thatched with cajan or grass, and with or without walls of wattle-and-daub'.

Descriptions of the town as late as the 1870s indicate that homes of the wealthy and the poor continued to be built side by side. Christie (1876: 303), who was a resident doctor and very well acquainted with the town, wrote 'The negro huts are not confined to any distinct part of the city, but are scattered over the whole place'. Stanley (1899: Vol. 1: 26) described the Malindi quarter of the town as 'a medley of tall white houses and low sheds, where wealth and squalor jostle side by side'.

The most conclusive evidence comes from the first detailed survey of the town conducted in 1893 after Zanzibar had been declared a British Protectorate. It reveals a surprisingly large number of earth and thatch houses that were still scattered all over the peninsula, interspersed among stone houses. There were then 1,506 stone houses, but no fewer than 5,179 of the earthen houses on the peninsula alone. In other words, the rich and the poor, and their stone houses and humble earthen ones, still co-existed all over the peninsula itself ('Survey' 1893). Even as late as 1923, according to the British town planner Lanchester (1923: 13), the Funguni sand spit jutting off the peninsula to the north

was 'covered with irregularly placed Swahili huts' and, in 1927, Ukutani in the centre of the town was still covered with earthen structures described as brothels.

Burton (1872: Vol. 1: 82, 97) says that in 1857 the area to the east of the creek was still 'bush and plantation'. Nevertheless, Guillain's map of 1846 and contemporary accounts show that while most of the town was then still located on the peninsula, earthen and even stone houses had begun to sprout across the creek in what came to be known as Ng'ambo, the 'Other Side'. In 1839 Leigh visited a one-storied stone house roofed with palm leaves belonging to the Governor of Zanzibar Sd. Sulaiman b. Hamed who owned a large tract of land there. A brother of a Comorian ruler and later a deposed ruler of Mukalla in south Yemen also had their houses there (Leigh and Kirkman 1980: 292–3, 493).

Substantive development of Ng'ambo appears to have begun sometime after 1857 because, by the time Burton (1872: Vol. 1: 96–7) published his book on Zanzibar, he was informed that the area around the creek had all been built up 'of late years'. Stanley (1899: Vol. 1: 26) speaks more revealingly about Ng'ambo in the early 1870s: 'It is here we find Wangwana, or Freedmen, of Zanzibar, Here they live very happily with the well-to-do Coast man, or Mswahili, poor Banyans, Hindis, Persians, Arabs, and Baluchis, respectable slave artisans, and tradesmen'.

Bishop Steere says that by 1870 at least 10,000 people were living in Ng'ambo in 12 distinct neighbourhoods (Fair 1994: 27). According to the 1893 Survey there were 9,134 earthen houses to the east of the creek, but there was also a finger of some 169 stone houses that penetrated along the roads in Mtendeni and Mbuyuni to the east of the bridge that pre-dated colonialism. Many of them may have been modest shop-front houses occupied by Indian shopkeepers serving the surrounding communities and rural people coming to town from plantation areas, but there were a number of multi-storied Omani-type houses as well. This means that even in the area on the other side of the creek, the two types of houses existed side by side.

p.538

Colonial transformation

The commercial empire on which the wealth and prosperity of Zanzibar Town was based was carved up in the colonial Partition of Africa, and in 1890 Zanzibar itself was declared a British Protectorate. Moreover, in 1897 slavery was abolished. Thus both sectors of Zanzibar's economy were quite fundamentally disturbed as Zanzibar lost its commercial hinterland, and the clove economy was transformed to rely increasingly on free labour and peasant production. Both of these transformations cut deeply into the prosperity of Zanzibar. Many merchants began to decamp to the mainland when the transit trade to Zanzibar began to be diverted to the new colonial ports of Dar es Salaam and Mombasa;

and the handful who remained in Zanzibar had to make do with the small internal market of the two small islands with a population of about 200,000. Many plantation owners were impoverished and became heavily indebted to moneylenders. Under these conditions, Zanzibar entered the colonial period with a stagnating economy. Members of both these classes could no longer contemplate building new houses; the most that they could do was to maintain what they had, with annual repairs replacing a few rotting mangrove poles at a time so that the house did not come down on their heads. Poverty was in fact the preservative that saved Zanzibar Town as a World Heritage City.

It was under these circumstances that the new colonial rulers assumed authority. In 1893 the colonial authorities commissioned a survey of Zanzibar Town. What they found was a Swahili town that had grown organically rather than according to western ideas of urban planning and socio-spatial segregation. It was a city that was organised not according to streets, but named neighbourhoods (*mitaa*), which were not necessarily segregated between the rich and the poor. Visiting Europeans described it as chaotic or ‘Oriental’, which they could not comprehend. Rev. Arthur Dodgshun (quoted in Bissell 2011: 23) expressed it thus: ‘Zanzibar could well afford to be pulled down and rebuilt. . . . The narrow streets and offensive alleys might then be made wide and straight and clean and the native huts would be pushed back far into the interior, where they ought to be’.



[Figure 46.4](#) Ng’ambo with modern Michenzani flats in background

With their colonial ‘civilising mission’ and racially inspired modernisation theories ringing in their heads (Bissell 2011: 11), the British found a town that was conveniently divided by the creek which they set about to convert into a *cordon sanitaire* between the town on the peninsula, and the ‘Native Quarter’ in Ng’ambo. Lanchester (1923: 13), who was commissioned to draw up a new town plan in 1923, considered Ng’ambo as ‘the real Swahili quarter’ and the Indian shopkeepers there as having ‘overflowed into all the bazaars running east-wards’, instead of being part of an organic growth of a Swahili town providing an essential urban service. Based on his Indian experience, he proposed a legal separation between the ‘Stone Town’ and Ng’ambo based on the dichotomy between the two building types, a ‘stone house’ and a ‘native hut’. The new laws imposed different

building regulations, rent and rates between them (Myers 1995: 200, 207–8). Earthen houses that still existed in large numbers on the peninsula were gradually driven out by regulations that prohibited the use of palm leaf roofs because they were prone to fires, but they did not object to them in Ng'ambo which indeed continued to suffer from frequent fires. Many such houses in the Vuga area were cleared out to make space for the Residency, the High Court and garden houses for colonial officials. The first town plan of 1923 proposed to canalise the creek, to make it deeper so that waste water flowing into it would be washed out to sea, which cut the two parts of the town even more sharply, although it eventually had to be entirely reclaimed. The so-called 'native quarter' was thus exiled across the creek largely during the colonial period. Therefore, it would not be an exaggeration to say that both the Stone Town and Ng'ambo, as distinct racially and socially segregated halves of Zanzibar Town, are colonial creations rather than exemplary of a typical Swahili town.

p.539

A cosmopolitan town

The Swahili building and architectural traditions constituted a unique local vernacular tradition influenced through long contact with Arabia, India and elsewhere. The different architectural traditions that came together did not remain distinct and separate, but were indigenised and mingled to create a unique cosmopolitanism. For example, the Omanis had introduced a flat-roofed house, which had to adapt to the rainy tropical climate of Zanzibar by eventually installing a peaked tile or corrugated iron sheet roof. They adopted the Swahili door-carving tradition, but the richer landowners demanded larger doors and more elaborate carving; in the 1880s Sultan Barghash introduced a new door-carving tradition from India with a semi-circular lintel and more floral designs in the original doors of the House of Wonders, but it was immediately Islamised and indigenised by the removal of animal figurines (Sheriff 1998: 13–19). The cosmopolitan culture of Zanzibar Old Town was made up of elements of diverse provenance, and while this does not lead automatically to a harmonious blend, it created a unique heritage recognised by UNESCO as a World Heritage site in 2000.

References

- Aldrick, J. 1990. 'The nineteenth-century carved wooden doors of the East African coast'. *Azania* 25 (1): 1–18.
- Allen, J. de V. 1974. 'Swahili culture reconsidered'. *Azania* 9: 105–38.
- Allen, J. de V. 1977. 'Settlement patterns on the Swahili coast'. Unpublished History

Seminar Paper, University of Nairobi.

- Battle, S. 1995. 'The Old Dispensary: an apogee of Zanzibari architecture'. In *The History & Conservation of Zanzibar Stone Town*, edited by A. Sheriff, 91–9. London: Currey.
- Baumann, O. 1897. *Die Insel Zanzibar*. Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot.
- Bissell, W. C. 2011. *Urban Design, Chaos and Colonial Power in Zanzibar*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Burton, R. F. 1872. *Zanzibar: City, Island and Coast*. London: Tinsley.
- Christie, J. 1876. *Cholera Epidemics in East Africa*. London: Macmillan.
- Decken, C. C. Von der. 1869–79. *Reisen in Ost-Afrika in den Jahren 1859 bis 1865*. Leipzig: Winter'sche.
- Fair, L. 1994. 'Pastimes and politics: a social history of Zanzibar's Ng'ambo community 1890–1950'. PhD diss., University of Minnesota.
- Frere, B. 1873. 'Memo regarding Banians or natives of India'. London: National Archives: FO84/1391.
- Ghaidan, U. 1976. *Lamu: A Study in Conservation*. Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau.
- Gray, J. 1962. *History of Zanzibar*. London: Oxford University Press.
- p.540
- Guillain, C. 1856. *Documents sur L'Histoire, La Géographie et Le Commerce de l'Afrique orientale* (album). Paris: Bertrand.
- Harkema, R. C. 1967. 'De stad Zanzibar in tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw enkele oudere Ostafrikaanse kuststeden'. PhD diss., University of Groningen.
- Harris, P. C. 1925. 'The Arab architecture of Zanzibar'. *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 4.4.1925: 341–5.
- Horton, M. 1987. 'The Swahili corridor'. *Scientific American* 255 (9): 86–93.
- Horton, M. C. and Clark, C. M. 1985. *Zanzibar Archaeological Survey, 1984/5*. Zanzibar: Ministry of Information, Culture and Sports.
- Körner, A. 2001. 'How does the lost style of residential and commercial interiors of stone towns in East Coast Africa, in particular stone town, Zanzibar, influence contemporary southern African design philosophy?' MA thesis, University of Wales.
- Lanchester, H. V. 1923. *Zanzibar, A Study in Tropical Town Planning*. Cheltenham: Burrow.
- Leigh, J. S. and Kirkman, J. S. 1980. 'The Zanzibar diary of John Studdy Leigh'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 13: 281–312, 492–507.
- Middleton, J. 1992. *The World of the Swahili*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Myers, G. A. 1995. 'The early history of the "other side" of Zanzibar Town'. In *The History & Conservation of Zanzibar Stone Town*, edited by A. Sheriff, 30–45. London: James Currey.

- Pearce, F. B. 1920. *Zanzibar, the Island Metropolis of East Africa*. London: Unwin.
- Ruschenberger, W. S. W. 1838. *Narrative of a Voyage Round the World*. London: Bentley.
- Sheriff, A. 1987. *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar*. London: James Currey.
- Sheriff, A. (Ed.) 1995. *The History & Conservation of Zanzibar Stone Town*. London: James Currey.
- Sheriff, A. 1995a. 'An outline history of Zanzibar Stone Town'. In *The History & Conservation of Zanzibar Stone Town*, edited by A. Sheriff, 8–29. London: James Currey.
- Sheriff, A. 1995b. 'Mosques, merchants & landowners in Zanzibar Stone Town'. In *The History & Conservation of Zanzibar Stone Town*, edited by A. Sheriff, 46–66. London: James Currey.
- Sheriff, A. 1998. *Zanzibar Stone Town: An Architectural Exploration*. Zanzibar: Gallery.
- Stanley, H. M. 1899. *Through the Dark Continent*. London: George Newnes.
- Survey of Zanzibar Town 1893. London: National Archives, FO925–234.
- Sykes, Col. 1853. 'Notes on the possessions of the Imaum of Muskat'. *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* 23: 101–19.
- Trimingham, J. S. 1964. *Islam in East Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

47

THE KILWA–NYASA CARAVAN ROUTE

The long-neglected trading corridor in southern Tanzania

Thomas J. Biginagwa and Bertram B. B. Mapunda

Introduction

The southern Tanzanian caravan route, linking the Lake Nyasa region with the southern coast of eastern Africa ([Figure 47.1](#)), is the oldest and most important artery of ivory and slave trade in the region. As J. Iliffe (1979: 40) notes, by ‘1776 the trade route leading south-westwards from Kilwa [Kisiwani, and later on Kilwa Kivinje] to the dense populations around Lake Nyasa was the only route inland from the Tanganyika coast’. Actually, the year cited here signifies the time when coastal traders ventured into the Kilwa hinterland; otherwise trade connections between the Kilwa coast and interior began much earlier, except that interior traders, namely Yao, were the ones coming to the coast and ‘exchange took place at the coastal ports’ (Iliffe 1979: 37). Kilwa’s exports at this time included ivory, slaves, hippo-teeth, tortoise shells, cowries, wax, gum and indigo, whereas imports were cloth (largely made in western India), hardware, dates, beef (from nearby Mafia Island), salt, arms, ammunition and money (Iliffe 1979: 38). In contrast to Kilwa, interior traders in the famous central route, with the destination at Bagamoyo, did not touch the coast until the 1810s (Sheriff 1987).

The port of Kilwa Kivinje, about 25 km north of Kilwa Kisiwani, gained popularity beginning from the late eighteenth century. As traffic peaked in the nineteenth century, Kilwa Kivinje took over completely. From here the route ventured westward to the Lake Nyasa region, either directly to its eastern shore or around its southern and northern tips, through northern Mozambique, southwestern Tanzania and northeastern Zambia respectively, into Malawi on its western shore (Alpers 1975). Unlike the central and northern routes in eastern Africa, the southern caravan route has received little attention from researchers, despite being the oldest and reportedly most famous in the region

(Beachey 1967; Alpers 1975; Sheriff 1987; Sutton 1990). Two possible reasons come to mind. First, there is a relative dearth of written accounts, such as those produced by missionaries, explorers and traders in the nineteenth century, compared with those associated with the two other routes. The second reason is the complexity of the route. Unlike others, the southern one had many branches, making it difficult for researchers to map them or identify which of the several was the main one. Worse still, the route is well-known for changing course quite regularly, along with general population movements and instability in the late nineteenth century due to factors such as the Ngoni invasion (Lieder 1894; Mapunda 2004, 2010).

p.542

In recent years new interest in the southern route has emerged (Biginagwa 2014; Katto 2016; Mgombere 2016). The aim has been to confirm which of the several was the main route, and to explore the consequences of the nineteenth-century trade on human environments and subsistence along that route. Built on new research findings (Biginagwa 2015; Katto 2016; Mgombere 2016; Biginagwa and Mapunda forthcoming), here we examine caravan routes in general and then focus on the southern route. The two sections are preceded by a theoretical grounding aimed at contextualising the eastern African caravan trade in nineteenth-century global economics. We end with a discussion of some camp sites or halt spots that confirm the locus of the route and the kinds of materials used during trade transactions.

East Africa in the Indian Ocean world-system

Unarguably, the trade in ivory and slaves that dominated the economy of the eastern African coast and caused social and political unrest in the interior was a global phenomenon, the control tower of which was far from this region. The business operated under what Wallerstein (1974) once referred to as a *world-system* (see Beaujard, this volume). As a multidisciplinary and macro-scale approach to world history and social change, world-system theory holds that the international (and in some cases also local) economic system operational in the modern world is typically a *capitalist world-economy*. It began in Europe and Americas in about 1500 CE and, under the spur of accumulation of capital, expanded over the next few centuries to cover the entire globe. Created by establishing long-distance trade in goods and linking production processes worldwide, the capitalist world-system was, and still is, marked by an axial division of labour and production processes into core, peripheral and semi-peripheral zones. Characteristically, the *core* has the political, economic and military power to enforce unequal rates of exchange with the periphery; allowing the core, among other things, to dump goods in peripheral zones, pay lower prices for raw materials, exploit the periphery for cheap labour, abuse their consumers and workforce, and erect trade barriers and quotas. The *peripheral*

zone is the least developed; it is exploited by the core in several ways, as above. Meanwhile, the *semi-peripheral* is somewhat intermediate; it is a 'core' with respect to the periphery and the 'periphery' with respect to the core. Wallerstein (1974) argues that the semi-peripheral plays an important role in the world economy, since it 'partially' deflects the political pressure from the peripheral, which might otherwise be directed against the core.

In nineteenth-century eastern Africa, the 'core' was western Europe and North America where ivory-manufacturing industries were located, and the 'periphery' was the coastal hinterland where ivory, slaves and other key raw materials were sourced out. 'Semi-periphery' was the coast, with all its trading centres and caravan termini such as Kilwa, Bagamoyo, Pangani, Mombasa, but most notably Zanzibar (Beaujard, this volume). These acted as commercial intermediaries between the interior and the capitalist industrialising West. Thus perceived, it should therefore be possible to trace archaeologically the flow of material culture between the three zones in either direction. It should also be possible to explore how the 'peripheral' communities would have been affected as a consequence of socio-economic transformations in the western world, as the following sections aim to demonstrate.

Caravan trade in eastern Africa: an overview

Although trade in ivory between eastern Africa and other parts of the world had existed for over two millennia (Freeman-Grenville 1962; Horton and Middleton 2000), not until the mid-nineteenth century did it expanded dramatically across this region (Beachey 1967; Sheriff 1987; Alpers 1992), when it was earmarked as a major source of ivory for industries in cutlery, combs, piano keys and billiard balls rapidly expanding in the West. These were prestigious goods highly sought by the rapidly growing middle class created by the Industrial Revolution in North America and Europe (Thorbahn 1979; Flanders 2006). Ivory and other key raw materials were collected from the interior and brought to the coast via caravans (Atieno Othiambo *et al.* 1977). These large caravans, often numbering over a thousand individuals at a time, were financed by Indian merchants residing in Zanzibar. They gave goods on credit to Arabs or Swahili traders who undertook to repay two or three times the original sum in ivory on their return (Iliffe 1979; Koponen 1988). The best known of the caravan traders was Hamed bin Muhammed el Murjebi, or Tippu Tip, whose creditor in Zanzibar was Taria Topan (Iliffe 1979). As the caravans travelled to the interior, they carried manufactured goods such as cloth, glass beads, brass wire, muskets and gunpowder, discharged in the interior to procure food, ivory and slaves (Alpers 1975; Sheriff 1987; Håkansson 2004).

The socio-economic, political and environmental consequences of the nineteenth-century eastern African caravan trade were many, and several aspects have received significant scholarly attention across disciplines (Koponen 1988; Giblin 1992; Kjekshus 1996; Håkansson 2004; Prestholdt 2004; Coutu 2011; Biginagwa 2012, 2014). One such consequence was the opening up of the interior as attested by the appearance of well-defined caravan routes (Rockel 2006). While almost every sizable coastal settlement had a corresponding hinterland for sourcing out ivory, slaves and other commodities, three outstanding caravan routes emerged, one before and two during the nineteenth century. The former terminated at Kilwa Kisiwani, and later shifted to Kilwa Kivinje; the latter two terminated at Bagamoyo and Pangani, respectively ([Figure 47.1](#)).

We focus here on the Kilwa–Nyasa caravan route, already in place by the 1770s (Iliffe 1979). It collected ivory and slaves as far inland as Unyanja (around Lake Nyasa), including what is today northern Mozambique, Malawi, eastern Zambia and south/southwestern Tanzania. The second, popularly referred to as the central route with Bagamoyo as its terminus, passed through central Tanzania to Ujiji, and west across Lake Tanganyika to Manyema country in what is today the Democratic Republic of Congo. This route branched northward at Tabora to the prosperous kingdoms of Karagwe, Buganda and Bunyoro, as well as southward through Ufipa to the Kazembe Kingdom of northern Zambia (Willis 1981) ([Figure 47.1](#)). Iliffe (1979: 41) argues that ‘Zanzibar’s prosperity and rising ivory prices around 1800 probably explain the development of a new long-distance trade route through central Tanganyika at that time’. But exchange of some kind seems to have been in existence in the area crossed by this route even before the nineteenth century, and no doubt foreign goods reached inland societies via this region during the eighteenth century. But the goods were moving through exchange between one regional trade network and another, not through a direct, single-trip transition as was the case during the nineteenth century (Iliffe 1979). Before the opening of this route, Kilwa was the sole supplier of slaves to Zanzibar (Iliffe 1979; Mapunda 2006).

The northern route terminated either at Pangani or Tanga. From the two ports, the route followed the Pangani River as close as possible up to the land of the Chaga and Maasai, south of Mt. Kilimanjaro, with a northward branch to the Pare River in the Pare Hills ([Figure 47.1](#)). However, as with the central route, here there had existed a regional trade previously (Walz 2005, 2010), but ‘long-distance trade was always controlled by coastal merchants who probably pioneered the route sometime after 1800’ (Iliffe 1979: 42).

Being the oldest, the southern caravan route surpasses the others in economic contribution, social ordeal and possibly environmental degradation. Unfortunately, these have not been appropriately captured by historians and related scholars up to now, including location of the main route and its tributaries. In what follows, we attempt to examine this route more closely, reviewing existing information and adding new findings from our historical-archaeological research conducted in the past two years between Kilwa Kivinje and Lake Nyasa.



Figure 47.1 The Kilwa-Nyasa caravan trade route (slightly modified from Koponen 1988: 82), and location of sites identified by this project

The southern caravan route

John Iliffe (1979: 40) notes that, ‘in 1776 the trade route leading south-westwards from Kilwa to the dense populations around Lake Nyasa was the only route inland from the Tanganyikan coast’. In fact, 1776 was a revival rather than the beginning of the route, as it had already been ‘pioneered in the sixteenth century when the Portuguese seized the gold trade and forced Kilwa’s merchants to trade with their own hinterland’. The trade was, by then, controlled by the Yao, focusing mostly on ivory and other raw materials in exchange for Indian cloth (Iliffe 1979; Sheriff 1987). Kilwa lost its grip on the interior trade after Oman’s conquest of Kilwa in 1698, scaring away Yao traders who had been operating virtually free of control. The Yao then shifted to trade with Mozambique Island

in the south. Their return to Kilwa in the 1770s is attributed to a number of factors, the leading of which are two. First, the growth of slave exports to the Persian Gulf and later on to the Mascarene Islands, French plantation colonies, developed after 1735 (Freeman-Grenville 1965). Second, Oman experienced a resurgence. The Busaidi dynasty seized control in the 1740s, built up their mercantile strength, and eventually made Zanzibar their commercial and political base. The two factors re-created a friendly and commercially attractive environment that revived the preexisting trade routes, promoting ivory and also the slave trade in the region (Alpers 1975; Iliffe 1979).

p.545

When the Yao returned to Kilwa they came as slave traders. During the eighteenth century Kilwa Kisiwani became eastern Africa's chief slaving port (Gray 1963; Freeman-Grenville 1965; Iliffe 1979), serving an area spanning all of southern Tanzania and Unyanja. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, other caravan termini had emerged south of Kilwa, such as Lindi and Mikindani in southern Tanzania, and Ibo in northern Mozambique, to compete with Kilwa Kisiwani. These later caravans, reportedly, were dominated by the Yao, Makonde and Ngindo from the interior, plus Arab and Swahili traders from the coast (Sheriff 1987). Until then, Kilwa Kisiwani remained the main caravan terminus of the southern caravan route (Wynne-Jones, this volume). Yet, from around the 1810s Kilwa Kisiwani declined. Gray (1964) is of the opinion that its weakening was not caused by southerly rivals that were themselves weak, but by other factors, especially socio-political unrest. There emerged a split of the ruling dynasty following the death of Sultan Yusuf in the 1820s. Thereafter a dispute emerged as to Yusuf's successor, which led to the imprisonment at Muscat of Muhammad ibn Sultan, one of the rival candidates. 'Mohammad was eventually released and set himself up as sultan at Kilwa Kivinje . . . His rival remained at Kilwa Kisiwani, but the trade of that place was gradually transferred to Kilwa Kivinje' (Gray 1963: 222–3). Henceforth, Kilwa Kivinje – 25 km further up the mainland coast from the older island port – took over as the lead slave port, preferred by traders for its shallow roadsteads (Sheriff 1987).

The commercial supremacy of Kilwa Kivinje as derived from ivory and slave trading activities is manifested in remarkable, ruined coral stone buildings seen in town today. These commercial and residential buildings line streets similar to those in cities such as Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, Pangani, Tanga and Bagamoyo (Garlake 1966). Archaeological excavations there have yielded materials that testify the same (Biginagwa 2015). Of the 1,129 potsherds recovered, 310 (27 per cent) were imported ([Table 47.1](#)). The percentage moves to over 50 per cent when we include other imports such as beads, glass and metals objects. Nicholls (1971) notes that in the 1840s there were 40 caravans per year, each with 8,000–10,000 slaves and 4,000–5,000 elephant tusks. Most caravans left Kilwa Kivinje in March and returned in November (Krapf 1860). From 1862 to 1867, a total of 97,203 slaves had been exported from Kilwa Kivinje, among whom 76,703 were deported to Zanzibar (Lyne 1905). All this signifies how the town was an important intercontinental

port during the nineteenth century (Sheriff 1987; Mapunda 2006; Biginagwa 2015).

European travellers who journeyed to southern Tanzania in the mid-nineteenth century (for example, Erhardt 1856; van der Decken 1860; Petermann 1870; Johnston 1879; Pfeil 1886; Lieder 1894) sketched the caravan route between Kilwa Kivinje and Lake Nyasa. However, these maps largely do not match, in terms of number of routes, names and location of villages, or stopping points. This signifies there were multiple routes, which changed from time to time due to security, availability of and access to basic provisions, and annual weather conditions. For example, it is frequently stated that caravans headed south to Mozambique through the upper Ruvuma River suffered from attacks by the Ngoni (Lieder 1894). Most often these routes followed permanent rivers. This seems to have been driven not only by easy access to water, but also easy penetration through otherwise dense thickets or even mosaic forests characterising the *miombo* woodlands of southern Tanzania. Rivers known to have been associated with caravan routes here include Mavuji, Matandu, Mbwenkuru, Rufiji, Ruvuma and Ruhuhu.

[*Table 47.1*](#) Archaeological materials unearthed at Kilwa Kivinje

<i>Excav. Unit</i>	<i>Local pottery</i>	<i>Import pottery</i>	<i>Glass beads</i>	<i>Glass bottles</i>	<i>Metal objects</i>	<i>Bone</i>	<i>Cowry shells</i>	<i>Others</i>
1	205	42	19	3	3	70	4	
2	403	213	201	2	43	128	39	
3	102	51	5	4	5	41	7	3 Gum copal
4	109	4	8	2	21	126	6	
Total	819	310	233	11	72	365	56	

p.546

From Kilwa Kivinje the route headed directly west for almost 30 km in what used to be land of the Ngindo people, before branching in two to the northwest and west. The former crossed the Selous Game Reserve into Ubena (Benaland), to the northern region of Lake Nyasa, all the way to Zambia and northern Malawi. The western branch proceeded another 100 km to Liwale before it forked again into southern and western routes. The southern branch passed through Uyao (Yaoland) across the Ruvuma River to Mozambique, and finally rounded the southern tip of Lake Nyasa to Malawi. The one proceeding west crossed the southern tip of what is today the Selous Game Reserve to Ungoni (Ngoniland), and further on to the central eastern shore of Lake Nyasa, and later in time, across the Lake to central Malawi. This direct westerly route has been referred to in this work as the ‘midrib’ for two reasons. First, it formed more or less a straight line due west from Kilwa Kivinje and, second, it was the main supplier of slaves and especially ivory, in quantity and quality, during the nineteenth-century heyday of Kilwa Kivinje.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Eustace, a British naval officer, reported that along the southern caravan routes there spread out a series of small stone forts, used by caravans to camp at night (Freeman-Grenville 1962). Our investigation so far has not been able to identify the stone forts, which may have been destroyed through farming and construction activities, or that remain but deep in the wilderness. It should be noted that much of the area where such structures are said to have been built is within the Selous Game Reserve or near it. Indeed, they may have been constructed in the first place to protect traders and others from animals; even today venturing into this area poses risk. Nonetheless, we have succeeded in locating several halt points and camps. The former includes Mtumbei-Kitambi along the Kilwa Kivinje–northern Lake Nyasa caravan branch. The latter, all along the midrib, include Kikole (of Kilwa) and Liwale (both in Lindi district), Kitanda, Mang'ua, Kikole (of Songea) and Mngaka/Ruanda in Ruvuma region). In the following section we focus on the midrib and show when, how and why the eastern shore of the Lake Nyasa became involved in the infamous trade and its role in the nineteenth-century world economic system.

The midrib of the southern caravan route

The southern route connecting Kilwa Kivinje with Unyanja had multiple branches. Although for the sake of simplicity we have referred to three branches only here – Kilwa Kivinje–northern Lake Nyasa region, Kilwa Kivinje–southern Lake Nyasa region and Kilwa Kivinje–central eastern Lake Nyasa region (midrib) – it should be understood that the real picture was more complex. Each of these sub-routes had its own tributaries and sub-tributaries, and these started at different times. While the northern and southern branches, for example, started in the eighteenth century (Ilfte 1979), the final part of the midrib, connecting Liwale with Lake Nyasa through southern Selous and Ngoniland, began operating in the late nineteenth century. Several indicators lead to this observation. First, historical archaeology conducted in the eastern Lake Nyasa region has revealed that the first Arab slave and ivory trader in the area was Rashid bin Masud in 1890 (Doerr 1998; Mapunda 2004). Having come from Kilwa Kivinje specifically for the trade, Masud and his companions established several stations that served as collection points at various places in the Lake Nyasa hinterland, including Kitanda, Man'gua, Kikole and Ruanda (Doerr 1998; Mapunda 2004, 2010).

p.547

The arrival of Rashid bin Masud and his team in the central eastern Lake Nyasa region in 1890 does not necessarily mean that coastal-borne slave and ivory trade in the area began that year; it could have begun before the arrival of Arab traders there, a pattern for almost all ports in eastern Africa (Ilfte 1979; Sheriff 1987). A remark made by Dr David Livingstone, the renowned traveller and missionary who, during the mid-nineteenth

century, made several trips into what is today north-western Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia and southern and western Tanzania, can be useful here. Upon his arrival at the south-eastern shore of Lake Nyasa in 1865, Livingstone was astounded by the population density of the area:

Never before in Africa have we seen anything like the dense population on the shores of Lake Nyasa. In the southern part, there was an almost unbroken chain of villages. On the beach of well-nigh every little sandy bay, dark crowds were standing, gazing at the novel sight of a boat under sail; and wherever we landed we were surrounded in a few seconds by hundreds of men, women, and children.

(Livingstone and Livingstone 1865: 372, quoted in Smith 1963: 256.)

We interpret Livingstone's observation as an indication of peace and stability. Regions hit by slave trade tended to have low population density. A good example is the region close to the coast (Smith 1963); by 1865, the eastern shore of Lake Nyasa was not yet directly 'contaminated' by the coast. We therefore can conclude that the direct connection between the Kilwa Kivinje and the central eastern shore of Lake Nyasa happened between 1865 and 1890, likely in the 1870s.

The main push for extending the midrib further west to reach Lake Nyasa in the late nineteenth century seems to be the steady increase of ivory demand in the world market, a demand that the regular suppliers via the northern and southern Lake Nyasa routes could not meet. In fact, adding the eastern shore did not satisfy the existing demand. Thus additional traders, seemingly Yao, crossed the Lake into central Malawi, not easily reached via land routes involving southern and northern tips of the Lake. According to Kalinga (1985), descendants of these traders are still there and referred to as Balowoka, which means 'those who crossed water/lake'. In this context, this route, apart from venturing into new land and supplying better ivory than any other route (Kalinga 1985), was the shortcut to the untouched land of central-western shores of the Lake and what gave the midrib prominence.

Archaeological investigations from 2012–15 at four stations along the midrib have proven that lucrative trade activities were going on in the nineteenth century between Kilwa Kivinje and the central Lake Nyasa region. The studied stations include Kilwa Kivinje, Mang'ua, Kikole (Songea) and Ruanda ([Figure 47.1](#)). Their selection was based on information from secondary sources and on-road survey, coupled with investigative stoppages along the route (Katto 2016; Mgombere 2016; Biginagwa and Mapunda forthcoming). The following are indicators of coast–interior trade connections from these sites.

Kilwa Kivinje

Kilwa Kivinje was selected to identify material evidence, especially imported objects that would be used to trace trade connections in the interior (see Wheeler 1955: 46). [Table 47.1](#) above presents the type and distribution of materials recovered from four units

excavated. Local pottery dominated the assemblages, followed by European imported pottery and glass beads. But of special interest is the stratigraphic distribution of local and imported materials, because imports are missing completely in the final two basal levels (40 cm) in each unit. This signifies that imports were a later introduction here, consistent with the nineteenth-century importance of Kilwa Kivinje. As shown in [Table 47.1](#), quantities of mass-produced pottery, European glass beads and bottles ([Figure 47.2](#)) were part of the cargo that landed at Kilwa Kivinje before they were discharged inland. Some of the recovered imported pottery display the maker's mark 'OPAQUE DE SARREGUEMINES' ([Figure 47.2](#)), a manufacturing point in Lorraine, France, during the late nineteenth century (www.porcelainmarksandmore.com). Similar ceramics have been found in northern Mozambique (Duarte 1993) and Mikindani, Mtwara (Pawlowicz 2015), indicating that it was a common import during the nineteenth century.

p.548

Mang'ua

Mang'ua is an abandoned village found along the Mbambabay Road, 25 km southwest of Songea town, Ruvuma Region, and *c.* 4 km south of Peramiho Catholic Mission. The settlement was reported by Lieder (1894) as having been founded in 1890 by Arab ivory and slave traders led by Rashid bin Masud from Kilwa. When Lieder visited Mang'ua in the early 1890s, it had 100–150 huts laid out following 'coastal traditions'. He noted that the village was unfortified since 'the earlier fortifications had already fallen into disrepair'. The first archaeological investigations at the site were conducted by Mapunda (2004) in 2003; the site was marked by circular rubble mounds, scatters of local and imported pottery, date palms, Kapok and mango trees extending *c.* 40 hectares.

[Table 47.2](#) Archaeological materials from Mang'ua

<i>Excav. Unit</i>	<i>Local pottery</i>	<i>Imported pottery</i>	<i>Glass beads</i>	<i>Bone</i>	<i>Slag</i>	<i>Metal objects</i>	<i>Glass bottles</i>	<i>Others</i>
1	45	1	35	0	0	0	0	
2	94	2	1	12	0	4	3	
3	140	0	98	14	0	0	4	1 gun shell, 1 spindle whorl
4	207	3	1	1	1	0	2	
5	3339	2	118	90	0	6	20	
6	275	7	56	14	0	4	36	
7	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	
8	37	0	0	3	0	1	5	
9	11	0	0	0	0	11	0	
Total	4158	15	309	134	1	26	70	2

We revisited the site for excavation in 2014 (Biginagwa and Mapunda forthcoming). A wide range of artefacts was recovered with local pottery emerging dominant in the artefactual assemblage, whereas European glass beads dominated imports ([Table 47.2](#)), the majority being barrel compound type with an Indian red outer layer built on an opaque white core ([Figure 47.2](#)). Nineteenth-century European accounts (for example, Burton 1860; Waller 1875) report that this bead type was the favourite in the interior of eastern Africa, and was given names such as *samsam* by Arabs, *chitakaraka* by Yao, *mangazi* ('blood') by Nyasa and *masokantussi* ('bird eyes') by Manyema along Lake Tanganyika. Burton (1860: 392) recorded other names in central-western Tanzania for the type such as *kimara-p'hamba* ('food finisher') and *kifunga mgi* ('town-breaker'), so-called due to women's passion for the style. Its presence at Mang'ua in relatively large numbers is confirmation of the site's involvement in the nineteenth-century caravan trade. Other imports at Mang'ua are glass bottles (n=70) and a variety of metal objects, including bilingually Arabic- and German-inscribed coins ([Figure 47.2](#)), and gun shells of flintlock type.

p.549

Kikole (Songea)

Located about 20 km southwest of Songea and 15 km south of Mang'ua ([Figure 47.1](#)), Kikole is a second station of trader Rashid bin Masud, after he abandoned Mang'ua by the turn of the century (Ebner 1987). Mapunda (2004) cites three reasons that compelled Masud to shift. First, he was running away from the Catholic Mission Station at Peramiho established in 1898, which stood against slave trade and slavery. Second, Masud was on bad terms with the Ngoni chiefs (Nkosi) Mputa and Chaburuma because he refused to pay tributes (*hongo*), and was enslaving and selling Ngoni subjects. Last, Masud was escaping from his competitor Mohamed Litunu, a Swahili ivory trader residing at Matomondo, 3 km southwest of Mang'ua, who had won favour from Chief Mputa by not being involved with the slave trade.

Unlike Mang'ua, Kikole has ruins of rectangular earthen and brick houses standing to date. A sharp 'archaeological' eye will notice fragments of local pottery and tuyeres that form part of the earthen mixture used to construct the houses. This suggests Kikole was inhabited by people who made and used these materials before the arrival of Arab ivory and slave traders (Mapunda 2004, 2010). A 1-m² test excavation undertaken in 2003 confirms this, revealing two distinct cultural horizons: one with imports such as plastics, textiles and beads in the upper 40 cm, and another with slag and local pottery at the bottom (Mapunda 2004). Six additional units were completed in 2014 as part of the current study. These targeted house floor, verandas, mounds and open spaces. Similar to Mang'ua, local pottery dominated the assemblages ([Table 47.3](#)). Other materials included two spindle whorls indicative of textile (Chittick 1974; Horton 1987; Chami 2004), European glass beads, imported pottery, glass bottles and two gun shells similar to those at Mang'ua

(Figure 47.2).

Table 47.3 Archaeological materials unearthed at Kikole

<i>Excav. Unit</i>	<i>Local pottery</i>	<i>Import pottery</i>	<i>Glass beads</i>	<i>Bone</i>	<i>Slag</i>	<i>Metal objects</i>	<i>Tuyere</i>	<i>Glass bottles</i>	<i>Daub</i>	<i>Others</i>
1	253	0	18	24	22	11	0	6	2	
2	32	1	4	0	1	2	0	22	1	
3	307	6	39	19	18	46	0	34	5	
4	589	2	6	1	125	4	72	8	4	Spindle whorls
5	91	1	1	13	1	0	0	5	1	
6	120	3	6	0	1	2	0	9	6	
Total	1392	13	74	57	168	65	72	84	19	

p.550

Ruanda

Similar to the rest, the village of Ruanda features in late nineteenth-century European accounts, both descriptive reports and sketch maps (for example, Lieder 1894). Located *c.* 60 km west of Mang'ua and 50 km east of Lake Nyasa, Ruanda is reported to have been established at the same time as Mang'ua by Arab traders from Kilwa who dealt in ivory and slaves (Ebner 1987). Lieder's (1894) sketch map indicates this village as having been located on the western tributary of the Ngaka [Mngaka] river, and that there were three other villages after Ruanda before reaching the Lake at the mouth of Ruhuhu River, called Pangoma [Ngoma]. The mentioned villages are Mlongosi [Ndongosi], Mkusso [Nkusi] and Gingama [Ngingama].

Archaeological survey in the area around Ruanda located a site that proved to be both ritualistically and archaeologically important. This is an inselberg called Lilangangondo, 'inselberg of war' (as it had been used for refuge during war times), measuring *c.* 1,000 m in basal circumference and 300 m high. The survey identified a dozen circular stone structures on the eastern slope, averaging 5 m in diameter, as well as an elaborate terrace system. Six stone circles were sampled for a 1 m² test excavation each. All test pits yielded cylindrical European glass beads (*n* = 20), along with local pottery (*n* = 790) and human and animal bone (*n* = 153). The presence of European glass beads certainly signifies that occupants of the stone circles were drawn into nineteenth-century coastal trade networks. The available evidence demonstrates the existence of a sophisticated community at Lilangangondo that would attract nineteenth-century traders searching for slaves, ivory or food in exchange for glass beads.



[*Figure 47.2*](#) Selection of imports and exports recovered from sites discussed: (top left) a variety of imported European glass beads; (top right) a variety of imported pottery (some bearing maker's marks); (bottom left) two sides of bilingually (Arabic and German) inscribed coins; (bottom right) gum copal (Photographs by T. Biginagwa)

p.551

Conclusion

We have examined the link between the eastern African coast and its hinterland, focusing on the ivory and slave trade routes, rooted in a project we are conducting in southern Tanzania. Since 2014 we have been examining the contribution of the Kilwa Kivinje to Unyanja caravan route, focusing on the interior portion that is least well understood.

We have shown definitively that the southern caravan route is the oldest in eastern Africa. Its history can be traced as far back as the sixteenth century, pioneered by Yao traders who first dealt mainly in ivory. Despite its age it is the least well known, for reasons we explored. Due to this neglect, a number of gaps are conspicuously notable, especially compared with the central and northern routes. In our new research we resolved to tackle the exact location of the route(s), social and environmental impacts of the caravan trade in the interior, and human response especially to negative impacts. While answers to

other questions have been handled elsewhere (for example, Katto 2016; Mgombere 2016; Biginagwa and Mapunda forthcoming), here we focused more on locating the direct due west route to Unyanja, which we consider to be the midrib of the southern route.

Historical sources place the southerly side-rib, across the Ruvuma through Yao land, to the southern tip of the Lake and into Malawi, as older than the northern side-rib via Selous, Ubenia to Unyakyusa and northern Malawi, and eastern Zambia. We are yet to establish why the western tip of the midrib did not entice coastal traders earlier than the late-nineteenth century. This is especially intriguing considering that Ngoni immigrants from South Africa, a major threat to caravan traders and travellers (Smith 1963; Lieder 1894; Mapunda 2004, 2010), did not settle in this area until the 1860s (Ebner 1987). Surprisingly, soon after, the midrib touched the central eastern shore of the Lake. The indigenous people of central-eastern Lake Nyasa region – the Ndendeule, Pangwa and Matengo – were hostile to Yao traders (who dominated caravan trade prior to coastal traders) but less so to Arabs. The seeming tolerance could have come voluntarily or by force, given that Arab traders were better equipped militarily than Yao and local people.

However, as the demand for slaves and ivory expanded by the mid-nineteenth century, traders who won the favour of the Ngoni were allowed in. This is especially true for the Njelu chiefdom led by Nkosi Mharule, occupying the southern segment of the Ngoni polity, more than their northern colleagues, the Mshope Ngoni under Chaburuma. Worst of all, Ngoni chiefs and sub-chiefs and army commanders sold war captives to slave caravans. They got them through their perpetual raids against the Ndendeule, Matengo and Pangwa, otherwise supposed to be their hosts, as well as their distant neighbours such as Makonde, Makua, Ngindo, Matumbi, Yao, Bena and Hehe (Ebner 1987; Mapunda 2004).

Ironically, the slave trade along the midrib peaked as anti-slave trade campaigns along the coast, championed by the British, were also peaking. When anti-slave trade patrols became stronger in the Kilwa waters during the late nineteenth century, traders took the land route to Bagamoyo, from where they smuggled slaves in small canoes to Zanzibar (Sheriff 1981; Mapunda 2006; Lane 2011). We argue that such risks were taken not only because slaves were a valuable commodity, but because at that ‘last hour of the day’ the Kilwa caravan traders had discovered the richest and cheapest mine of the ‘black gold’ along the shores of Lake Nyasa, both east and west. This infamous discovery, coupled with Ngoni notoriety, has left lasting impacts along the midrib of the southern caravan route as well summarised by Gray (1963: 237):

Accurate figures for the slave-trade are almost impossible to compile, but the explorers were all agreed that the Arab slavers were expanding the area of their activities, and bringing more and more slaves to the coast, despite British naval patrols and the treaties. Kilwa maintained its predominance as a slave-collecting centre, and by this time [late nineteenth century] its hinterland was showing signs of the appalling effects of the trade. Consul Rigby was told by Indian residents of Kilwa that areas ten or twelve days’ march inland, once thickly populated were now ruined and

empty of people.

References

- Alpers, E. A. 1975. *Ivory and Slaves: Changing Pattern of International Trade in East Central Africa to the Later Nineteenth Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Alpers, E. A. 1992. 'The ivory trade in Africa: an historical overview'. In *Elephant: The Animal and Its Ivory in African Culture*, edited by D. H. Ross, 349–63. Los Angeles: Fowler Museum of Cultural History.
- Atieno Othiambo, E. S., Ouso, T. I. and Williams, J. F. M. 1977. *A History of East Africa*. London: Longman Group.
- Beachey, R. W. 1967. 'The East African ivory trade in the nineteenth century'. *The Journal of African History* 8 (2): 269–90.
- Biginagwa, T. 2012. 'Historical archaeology of the 19th-century caravan trade in north-eastern Tanzania: a zooarchaeology perspective'. PhD diss., University of York.
- Biginagwa, T. 2014. 'Historical archaeology in East Africa'. In *Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology*, edited by C. Smith, 2265–73. New York: Springer.
- Biginagwa, T. J. and Mapunda, B. B. forthcoming. 'Mapping the nineteenth-century ivory and slave caravan route of southern Tanzania'.
- Burton, R. 1860. *The Lake Regions of Central Africa: A Picture of Exploration*, I and II. London: Longman.
- Chami, F. 2004. *Historical Archaeology of Bagamoyo: Excavations at the Caravan-serai*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.
- Chittick, N. 1974. *Kilwa*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Coutu, A. 2011. 'Tracing the links between elephants, humans, and landscapes during the 19th century East African ivory trade: a bioarchaeological study'. PhD diss., University of York.
- Doerr, L. 1998. *Peramiho 1898–1998 in the Service of the Missionary Church*, Vols. 1 and 3. Ndanda-Peramiho: Benedictine Publications.
- Duarte, R. T. 1993. *Northern Mozambique in the Swahili World: An Archaeological Approach*. Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Uppsaliensis, Studies in African Archaeology 4.
- Ebner, E. 1987. *The History of the Wangoni and Their Origin in the South African Bantu Tribes*. Ndanda: Benedictine Publications.
- Erhardt, J. 1856. 'Memoire zur Erlauterung der von ihm und J. Rebmann zusammengestellten Karte von Ost-und Central-Afrika'. In *Mittheilungen aus Justus Perthes Geographischer Anstalt unber wichtige neue Erforschungen auf dem Gesamtgebiete der Geogahie*, Vol. 2, edited by A. Petermann, 19–32. Justus Perthes, Gotha.
- Flanders, J. 2006. *Consuming Passions: Leisure and Pleasure in Victorian Britain*. London: Harper

Perennial.

- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1962. *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the First to the Earlier Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1965. *The French at Kilwa Island*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Garlake, P. 1966. *The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Giblin, J. L. 1992. *The Politics of Environmental Control in Northeastern Tanzania, 1840–1940*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Gray, J. M. 1963. 'Zanzibar and the coastal belt, 1840–1884'. In *History of East Africa*, edited by R. Oliver and G. Mathew, 212–51. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Gray, J. M. 1964. 'A French account of Kilwa at the end of the eighteenth century'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 63: 20–6.
- Håkansson, N. T. 2004. 'The human ecology of world systems in East Africa: the impact of the ivory trade'. *Human Ecology* 32 (5): 561–91.

p.553

- Horton, M. 1987. 'The Swahili corridor'. *Scientific American* 255: 86–93.
- Horton, M. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Iliffe, J. 1979. *A Modern History of Tanganyika*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Johnston, K. 1879. 'Notes of a trip from Zanzibar to Usambara in February and March 1879'. *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 1 (9): 545–58.
- Kalinga, O. 1985. 'The Balowola and the establishment of states east of Lake Malawi'. In *State Formation in Eastern Africa*, edited by A. Salim, 36–52. New York: St. Martin Press.
- Katto, P. 2016. 'Coast-interior connectivity during the nineteenth-century: archaeological evidence of the caravan trade from southern Tanzania'. MA diss., University of Dar es Salaam.
- Kjekshus, H. 1996. *Ecology Control and Economic Development in East African History: The Case of Tanganyika 1850–1950* (2nd Ed.). Oxford: James Currey.
- Koponen, J. 1988. *People and Production in Late Pre-colonial Tanzania: History and Structures*. Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies.
- Krapf, J. [1968] 1860. *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours during an Eighteen Years' Residence in Eastern Africa* (2nd Ed.). Abingdon: Frank Cass & Co., reprint.
- Lane, P. 2011. 'Slavery and slave trading in eastern Africa: exploring the intersections of historical and archaeological evidence'. In *Slavery in Africa: Archaeology and Memory*, edited by P. J. Lane and K. C. MacDonald, 1–24. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lieder, G. 1894. *Beobachtungen auf der Ubena-Nyasa-Expedition: Mitteilungen aus den Deutschen Schutzgebieten mit Benutzung Amtlicher*. *Que/len* 7, 271–6.

- Livingstone, D. and Livingstone, C. 1865. *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and Its Tributaries; and the Discovery of the Lakes Shinwa and Nyasa*. London: John Murray.
- Lyne, R. N. 1905. *Zanzibar in Contemporary Times*. London: Hurst and Blackett.
- Mapunda, B. 2004. 'East African slave trade: unravelling post-abolition slave coverts in the interior of southern Tanzania'. *Utafiti* 5 (1): 61–76.
- Mapunda, B. 2006. 'Bagamoyo: from a slave port to a tourist destination'. *Eastern Africa Journal of Development Studies* 1 (1): 1–19.
- Mapunda, B. 2010. 'Reexamining the Maji Maji War in Ungoni with a blend of archaeology and oral history'. In *Maji Maji: Lifting the Fog of War*, edited by J. Giblin and J. Monson, 221–38. Leiden: Brill.
- Mgombera, C. 2016. 'Archaeobotanical evidence of crop economies along the nineteenth-century caravan route in southern Tanzania'. MA diss., University of Dar es Salaam.
- Nicholls, C. S. 1971. *The Swahili Coast: Politics, Diplomacy and Trade on the East African Littoral, 1798–1856*. St Antony's College, Oxford, Publications no. 2. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Pawlowicz, M. C. 2015. 'Competition and ceramics on the East African coast: long-term perspectives on nineteenth-century history at the Swahili port town of Mikindani, Tanzania'. *History in Africa* 42: 335–55.
- Petermann, A. 1870. 'Chronologische Übersicht von Livingstone's Reisen in Sud-Afrika 1840–1869'. In *Mittheilungen aus Justus Perthes' Geographischer Anstalt über wichtige neue Erforschungen auf dem Gesamtgebiete der Geographie*, Vol. 16, edited by A. Petermann, 10. Justus Perthes, Gotha.
- Pfeil, J. G. 1886. 'Die Erforschung des Ulangagebietes'. In *St. Petermanns Mittheilungen aus Justus Perthes Geographischer Anstalt*, Vol. 32, edited by Dr A. Petermann, 353–62. Justus Perthes, Gotha.
- Prestholdt, J. 2004. 'On the global repercussions of East African consumerism'. *American Historical Review* 109 (3): 755–81.
- Rockel, S. 2006. *Carriers of Culture: Labor on the Road in Nineteenth-Century East Africa*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Sheriff, A. 1981. 'The East African coast and its role in maritime trade'. In *UNESCO General History of Africa*, Vol. 2, edited by G. Mokhtar, 551–67. London: James Currey.
- Sheriff, A. 1987. *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Smith, A. 1963. 'The southern section of the Interior: 1840–1884'. In *History of East Africa* Vol. I, edited by R. Olivier and G. Mathew, 253–96. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- Sutton, J. E. G. 1990. *A Thousand Years of East Africa*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Thorbahn, P. 1979. 'The pre-colonial ivory trade of East Africa: reconstruction of a human-elephant ecosystem'. PhD diss., University of Massachusetts.

Van der Decken, 1860. *Reisen in Ost-Afrika in den Jahren 1859 bis 1861*. C. F. Winter'sche Verlagshandlung, Leipzig.

p.554

Waller, H. 1875. *The Last Journals of David Livingstone, in Central Africa*. Berlin: Karig Press.

Wallerstein, I. 1974. *The Modern World-System. 1: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-System in the Sixteenth Century*. New York: Academic.

Walz, J. 2005. 'Mombo and the Mkomazi corridor: preliminary findings from lowland north-eastern Tanzania'. In *Salvaging Tanzania's Cultural Heritage*, edited by B. Mapunda and P. Msemwa, 198–213. Dar es Salaam: University of Dar es Salaam Press.

Walz, J. 2010. 'Route to a regional past: an archaeology of the lower Pangani (Ruvu) basin, Tanzania, 500–1900 CE'. PhD diss., University of Florida.

Wheeler, M. 1955. 'Archaeology in East Africa'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 40: 43–7.

Willis, R. 1981. *A State in the Making: Myth, History and Social Transformation in Pre-colonial Ufipa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

The contemporary coast

48

ISLAM IN THE SWAHILI WORLD

Connected authorities

Anne K. Bang

The history of Islam in the Swahili world is one of connectivity, from the religion's first arrival on the eastern African coast to the present-day array of theological and ideological debates. Islam on the coast has been formed by long-standing connections both across the ocean to the lands of the Red Sea, the Arabian Peninsula and India, and also to the interior, to neighbouring peoples and further into what is today eastern Congo. These networks of Islamic scholarship extending in both directions can in many ways be understood as a socio-religious arena in its own right – a vibrant Shāfi'ī-Sunni *ecumene* that has been constituted by varying and at times intertwined systems of authority. However, this arena has never been permanent, either in extent or content. On the contrary, religious authority has been lived and enacted differently at different points in time, thus constituting different subsets of Islamic doctrine and practice, which in turn impacted on how Islam was localised.

This chapter will present how this socio-religious arena was constituted by three different modes of connectivity. First, migration from the Ḥaḍramawt in Yemen, and specifically the arrival of *sharifu* clans, will be viewed as a source of religious authority that shaped the socio-religious arena along the Swahili coast. Second, the increased speed and frequency of trans-oceanic text circulation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries will be viewed as both supplanting pre-existing authority while, at the same time, providing legitimacy to specific forms of Shāfi'ī-Sunni Islamic practice. Finally, the increased frequency of educational travel in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries will be presented as a way in which religious authority was established in eastern Africa. This selection should not be understood to be exhaustive. On the contrary, several parallel systems of authority were formed and maintained in this socio-religious arena. The influx of Muslims of South Asian origin in the nineteenth century, adoption of mainland practices in coastal

Islam, role of Ibādī scholarship, and not least Islam as a legal basis for trade are other examples of how Swahili Islam has been shaped. Language, too, is a factor that will not be considered here. Examples that may be mentioned include the role of Swahili as a literary and poetic language that in itself constituted both social and religious authority, or the ways in which speakers of Kimwani, Emakhuwa and other languages on the Swahili periphery adopted the Arabic script (Bonate 2016), thus appropriating not only the technology of writing, but also the authority that went with the Arabic script itself (McIntosh 2009). This said, the starting point that Islam and its localised set of practices developed as a function of connectivity is as valid in eastern Africa as elsewhere.

p.558

Ḥaḍramī migration and Sufi traditions: connecting and re-connecting authority

Islam first arrived on the eastern African coast by the eighth century CE, via contact with newly converted Islamic lands. The identification of precise sources of influence is difficult based solely on the archaeological record, yet both Khawārij (from the Persian Gulf) and Zaydi (Red Sea) influences have been identified in the earliest mosques and epigraphic evidence (Horton 2001; Insoll 2003). By the fourteenth century, Ibn Battuta attests to a Sunni Shāfi'ī community at Kilwa. Archaeologists have also begun to suggest an Ibadi presence from earliest times, evident in the understated mosque architecture (Horton 2013). This demonstrates the range of contacts and influences in the history of eastern African Islam, putting the historical period into context. When it comes to Ḥaḍramī migration to the coast, little is known about those who made their way to eastern Africa before *c.* 1500. Some information can be gleaned about the 'Alawī *sāda* (a Ḥaḍramī stratum claiming *shāfi'ī* descent), because of their tendency towards genealogy-keeping, but even this does not go back beyond the mid-sixteenth century. While B. G. Martin (1971, 1975) made an early note of the unreliability of these genealogies, they nonetheless give an indication of which lineages made the move from Ḥaḍramawt to eastern Africa. Among these early settlers were the Āl Jamal al-Layl and the Āl Shaykh Abū Bakr b. Sālim, both Ḥaḍramī 'Alawī clans with branches throughout the Indian Ocean (Martin 1975; Bang 2003).

Their first settlement was in Pate in the Lamu Archipelago, which became a centre of Islamic scholarship where a scholarly class kept the tenets of the religion of their homeland, in all likelihood reinforced by connections with South Arabia. The Islam propagated by these 'Alawī migrants was strongly Sufi oriented and typified by a set of distinctive Ḥaḍramī 'Alawī doctrines. These organised teachings were first fully

formulated in the thirteenth-century Ḥaḍramawt, and their authority rested on a dual *isnād* (chain of transmission) based on the *nasab* (descent) line of the scholar, and on initiation into the methods and beliefs of the order. Central to this ‘Alawī Sufi authority was the perceived special *baraka* (blessing, extraordinary charisma or powers) residing in the ‘Alawī bloodline that could be traced back to the Prophet. As the ‘Alawīyya developed, the Sufi outlook came to be coupled with a strong emphasis on the Shar‘iyya, notably Shāfi‘ī *fiqh* (jurisprudence). In particular, the *Minhāj al-Ṭālibīn* by Abū Zakariyy al-Nawwawī (d. 1277) was a core text that was almost certainly in use in eastern Africa from an early point.

It is difficult to know exactly how contact between religious scholars was maintained – let alone exactly which teachings and texts were transmitted between them. Due to the scarcity of written sources, we simply do not know if intellectual developments within the Ḥaḍramī ‘Alawī tradition were known and circulated in eastern Africa, such as, for example, the entire ‘Alawī Sufi literature that emerged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

What is clear is that, by the nineteenth century, a developed ‘Alawī canon and its related practices was known and circulated among scholars as an integral part of Islam in eastern Africa, possibly through a process of re-connecting between descendants of early migrants and new arrivals. In the nineteenth century, the rise of the Omani Bū Sa‘īdī family, as rulers of Oman and Zanzibar, led to substantial re-connecting on the family level, whereby ‘old’ and ‘new’ Arab families reconnected with the (real or perceived) homeland in Ḥaḍramawt; similar developments took place for Omani families long settled in eastern Africa, who now re-connected to their homeland through new arrivals. In this new Bū Sa‘īdī order, claiming Arab ancestry brought benefits and career opportunities, and newly arrived and older families together formed new strata of religious authority based precisely on their connections to Ḥaḍramawt or Oman. This re-connecting had its basis in family links, but was first and foremost a re-connecting of religious authority, based in an emerging Sufi reformist drive within the ‘Alawī tradition. For the nineteenth century, a richer range of Islamic scholarly material is still extant, thus we can find clear evidence of reference to authorities beyond the local or regional. This took the form of scholarly attention focused on genealogy and Sufi texts that could prove the (real or perceived) claim to Arab origins. For the ‘Alawī Sufi order in particular, it also entailed an increasing spiritual focus on the Ḥaḍramawt as a land of purity, and on Tarīm as a scholarly and spiritual centre (Ho 2006).

The Riyadhha Mosque and Islamic school in Lamu is a good case in point. The mosque was founded in the late nineteenth century by Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Alawī Jamal al-Layl (1853–1936), known locally as Habib Saleh (Farsy 1989: *passim*). For the founding of the Riyadhha, the

authority of the well-known ‘Alawī scholar ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Ḥisbī (d. 1915) in Say’ūn, Ḥaḍramawt, was essential. He was an important reformist figure within ‘Alawī Sufism, and in Lamu he became a point of reference both for extraordinary *baraka*, but also for a discursive tradition that we may term the ‘‘Alawī tradition’ (Lienhardt 1959; Bang 2014b, 2015). This tradition included a set of prayers to be recited at fixed days and times, the most important being the ‘Mawlid al-Ḥibshī’ (formally entitled ‘Simṭ al-Durrar’), composed by ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Ḥibshī himself. Celebration of the Prophet’s birthday with public recitations and musical instruments (drums, tambourines) is still a hallmark of the Riyadhha mosque. Another enduring reformist agenda of the Riyadhha was the inclusion of non-Swahili people (primarily Oromo and Pokomo) who were considered outsiders by the traditional Lamu *waungwana* (elite). Finally, as will be discussed below, the Riyadhha incorporated the bulk of the Ḥaḍramī ‘Alawī canonical texts into its library and teaching curriculum, first in the form of manuscripts and, by the twentieth century, also in the form of printed books. By the time the Riyadhha was fully operational in the late nineteenth century, teachers there could draw on a well-established ‘Alawī canon of Sufi texts, alongside *fiqh*, *tafsīr* (Quranic commentary), poetry, grammar, rhetoric and Arabic language. The ability to access this canon, which above all required knowledge of Arabic, was by this time a pre-requisite to become part of the learned class, especially in Lamu and Zanzibar but also in other urban centres on the coast.

In terms of Islamic practice, the ‘Alawiyya represented a set of old, but reformed (or perhaps more correctly: re-connected) prayers and rituals. By the late nineteenth century these had spread well beyond their earlier confines of the Ḥaḍramī ‘Alawī descent lines to the broader Swahili-speaking population along the coast. Supererogatory prayers, such as, for example, the *Rātīb al-Ḥaddād* (composed by the seventeenth-century Ḥaḍramī ‘Alawī poet and Sufi ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥaddād), increasingly came to be seen as common practice in the urban centres. However, the latter half of the nineteenth century also saw the rise of new forms of organised Sufism, emerging in the broader Middle Eastern and Islamic world, but spreading quickly to eastern Africa. In the Swahili-speaking world, the two that spread most rapidly and widely were the Shādhiliyya-Yashrūṭiyya and the Qādiriyya (Loimeier 2009; Bang 2003: 143–61). In the diffusion of these new Sufi orders, connectivity was particularly important, as authority was understood to rest ultimately with the saintly founder of the order, but also with the contemporary ‘headquarters’ of the orders. For the Shādhiliyya-Yashrūṭiyya and Qādiriyya, this meant Acra (Palestine) and Baghdad, respectively. Initiation documents granted to recruits spelled out this chain of authority in great detail. There were also regional authorities, such as, for example, Shaykh Uways al-Barawī (d. 1909), who propagated the Qādiriyya and whose prayers and poetry were widely recited along the eastern African coast. Finally, despite the potentially unifying power of the Sufi orders, a division seems also to have occurred into ethnic ‘branches’ of the orders (Bang 2014a: 47–71). For example, Comorians tended to turn to

the Shādhiliyya while the Qādiriyya recruited broadly on the mainland (Martin 1976: 152–76; Becker 2008). The religious leaders of the ‘Alawiyya, on the other hand, started to teach and distribute copies of texts that reinforced its chains of authority to Ḥaḍramawt, but also to an increasingly influential ‘Alawī network in Mecca. Central in this latter chain of authority was the Shāfi‘ī *muftī* of Mecca, Aḥmad Zaynī Daḥlān (on him, see Schacht 1978; Sharkey 1994; Freitag 2003; Bang 2014a). At the local level, all orders had *shuyukh* who held considerable authority based on their access to texts, leadership in ritual functions and, probably (this is still understudied), considerable economic power in the sense that resources were redistributed through the orders. The most important social consequence of the rise of organised Sufism, for all orders in eastern Africa, was the incorporation of formerly marginalised groups into the Islamic community, notably former slaves and migrants (Pouwels 1987; Glassman 1995).

p.560

Text circulation as connected authority

There is a scarcity of textual Islamic material from the sixteenth, seventeenth and even eighteenth centuries. That said, there is every reason to believe that Muslims were copying not only the Quran and *ḥadīth* collections, but also legal texts, most likely the *Minhāj al-Ṭālibīn*, which was the most widely used legal text in the entire Indian Ocean basin. Its commentaries are also likely to have been in use.

What is certain is that nineteenth-century eastern African Islam became increasingly ‘bookish’, in the sense that Muslims now were more likely to turn to written sources of authority, grounded in Islamic texts at the expense of locally constituted authority. This textual orientation favoured teachers and scholars who could read and write Arabic, and thus keep up with developments in Cairo, Mecca, Ḥaḍramawt and other centres. Many such scholars were Ḥaḍramī-Alawī, due precisely to the ‘re-connecting’ described above, but it was also an avenue to authority that was open to a much broader segment of the population. Knowing Arabic, in other words, became a criterion that could override descent.

This ‘bookishness’ is evident in the text collections that remain from the period, both manuscript and print. The last decades of the nineteenth century are also when we see the rise of a new form of educational institution: the mosque-college rooted in Sufism, often established with inspiration from Ḥaḍramawt (such as the Riyadha of Lamu described above). Another source of inspiration was Egypt, where Rashīd Riḍā’s educational activities were known through the distribution of journals such as *al-Manār*. Inspiration for the new educational model may even have come from as far away as Indonesia, through

the Ḥaḍramī diaspora.

These educational institutions needed texts to teach, but also to reference authority. Before the emergence of print in the Indian Ocean basin around the mid-nineteenth century (Green 2013), this transmission had been the task of manuscript copyists, but also of travellers who brought manuscripts home from journeys in the Ḥijāz, Ḥaḍramawt or Middle East. There are indications that individuals ‘ordered’ manuscript texts to be brought by travellers, and important new texts could make it from Arabia or the Middle East to eastern Africa a remarkably short time after completion (Bang 2015: 118–19). The eastern African ‘*ulamā*’ was thus as up-to-date as one could be in the manuscript age. Furthermore, the donation of manuscripts as *waqf* (pious endowment, permanently removing them from circulation in the market) served as a way for the learned class to ensure that manuscripts and books remained within families or institutions. Last, but not least, copyists played a key role in bringing important Islamic texts to the mosques and religious institutions on the eastern African coast. A survey from the Riyadha mosque in Lamu shows that the copyists came from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including Somali, Bajuni, Yemeni and Comorian, which in turn strongly indicates that Islamic learning was not solely the prerogative of those claiming Arab descent (Bang 2015).

p.561

The transition to print was a long drawn-out process for Islamic text circulation in eastern Africa. The first Arabic printing press there was imported by the Bū Sa‘idī sultan in 1879. In its early period, it mainly published Ibādī legal works and thus played a minor part in the textual tradition of Shāfi‘ī-Sunni Islam on the coast. Nonetheless, the Bū Sa‘idī sultans and the leading Omani families were crucial also to the circulation of Shāfi‘ī textual material, through their close contact with the wider *nahḍa* (‘re-awakening’, understood as a cultural renaissance) in the Middle East and beyond (Ghazal 2010).

Book collections in Zanzibar and Lamu indicate that the import of printed books started in earnest around the turn of the twentieth century, and was gradually outdated manuscripts between 1910 and 1925. That said, printed text and manuscript copying existed side by side for a remarkably long period. Imported printed books appear from at least the 1880s, but manuscripts were still being endowed to Islamic teaching institutions as late as the 1940s. Particularly through the institution of *waqf*, manuscripts could be re-circulated well into the age of print (Bang 2011). There are many reasons why manuscripts could have such extraordinary long lives; for example, the original owner or copyist of the manuscript may have had status. The answer may also simply be that a given text was not readily available in printed form. Another intriguing possibility is that manuscripts were already perceived as cultural heritage, and preserved for that reason.

Arabic printed books were brought from Arabia (primarily Ḥaḍramawt and Mecca), from

the Levant and, above all, from Egypt. Individuals and institutions would order copies directly from publishing houses, or they would instruct travellers to shop on their behalf. There was also an import from India, through the Munshi Karim Press in Bombay, which had an agent in Zanzibar for books printed in Arabic or Swahili (Green 2013: 98). The recipients ranged from the Bū Saʿīdī sultans themselves, to mosques and teaching facilities, to individual scholars.

In the same period, journals and newspapers from the Middle East were also becoming increasingly accessible – at least in Zanzibar, Mombasa and Lamu. However, the question must be raised whether the Shāfiʿīs (and specifically the representatives of Sufi orders), too, can be said to be participants in the ongoing *nahḍa*, and thus in the discourse of global Islam. This, in turn, can be linked to the question of authority. Further research will determine to what extent the new printed books and publications were overriding earlier authorities, i.e. manuscripts, or even oral renderings of text.

From the 1890s, eastern African Islamic scholars started to have their own works published in print. We know little about how the actual process took place. It is likely that contacts with publishing houses such as al-Ḥalabī printers in Cairo came about through personal contacts, go-betweens and intellectual networks in general. It is also clear that there existed, at least by the 1920s, a group of individuals willing to sponsor the printing of local authors. Most of the known works written by eastern African Muslims and printed in Egypt carry inscriptions that the work was printed at the expense (‘*alā nafaqa*’) of one or more persons. For example, texts used in the madrasas (prayer books, devotional texts) were printed and paid for by wealthy businessmen or by donations from the congregation (Bang 2014a: 135, 137).

Not surprisingly, scholars of Ḥaḍramī or Omani origin, or with close connections to the Arabian peninsula, were among the earliest to have their books printed. One prominent example is the work *Manhal al-Wurūd* by the later chief Shāfiʿī qāḍī of Zanzibar, Aḥmad b. Sumayṭ. It was published in Mecca by *Maṭbaʿat al-Mīriyya* in 1315/1897–8, having been completed in manuscript form in 1895. In other words, the text went more or less directly to print in Mecca without prior circulation in manuscript form (Bang 2014a: 133–5). Two developments are evident from the publication history of Aḥmad b. Sumayṭ. First, his ability as a second-generation Ḥaḍramī fiAlawī born in eastern Africa (he had an excellent command of Arabic), thus placing him in a position of authority. However, his education in Ḥaḍramawt and his network with co-religionists and publishers also pre-disposed an orientation towards formulating authority in text – in this case in printed text.

In the twentieth century, eastern African Islamic scholars also started to publish their own journals and newspapers. This particular publication style was the hallmark of a new

generation of reformers, who gradually were rejecting the Sufi outlook in favour of a more modernist orientation (Loimeier 2003). Inspired by reformist thought emanating from the Middle East, they were early exponents of the later reformist viewpoint that Sufi practices amounted to ‘bid’a’ (innovation), or even worse ‘shirk’ (polytheism). However, their criticism had not yet developed into what is today known as Salafism, where all practices not sanctioned by the Quran or Hadith are rejected. In fact, their arguments often coincided with that coming from the Sufi orders themselves, who were also engaged in the process of reform. In both cases, textual authority was invoked. One particularly influential example was Shaykh al-Amin al-Mazrui, who in 1932 founded the periodical *Al-Islah*, inspired by Rashīd Riḍā’ and *al-Manār* (Mathews 2013). Contrary to, for example, the *Manhal al-Wurrād* mentioned above, *al-Islah* published both in Swahili and Arabic, and was a strong exponent for the emerging reformist trend of thought that was critical of the colonial project, but also of traditional Sufi-based practices.

Travel in the search of knowledge – Islam transcending the Swahili world

The waters between eastern Africa, the Arabian peninsula and the Middle East have, since the introduction of Islam, been traversed by travellers who left their homes and went elsewhere in search of Islamic knowledge. This search was implicitly also a search for authority, as the traveller would return home not only with new skills (typically Arabic language and legal training), but also with newly acquired *ijāzas* (spiritual certificates, either linked to certain texts or to the recitation of certain prayers or Sufi *dhikr*). This type of travel, the *riḥla*, is also a literary genre whereby the traveller relates his encounters en route. The narratives of the encounters are hardly random, but rather structured to demonstrate that the narrator has learnt from the highest possible authorities. The genre itself is an old one in the Islamic world (Euben 2006: 34–45 and *passim*), often featuring the pilgrimage to Mecca as a ‘high point’ of the narrative.

Clearly, this type of travel took place before the nineteenth century, and probably from the very early period of Islam on the Swahili coast. It is also very likely that individual travellers would write accounts of their journeys, if nothing else for their family and friends. However, the *riḥlas* written in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries demonstrate not only how eastern African Muslims sought to place themselves in positions of authority, but also how this authority was increasingly changing from an esoterically based transmission, to one that mainly favoured exoteric learning. The latter half of the nineteenth century saw a series of journeys ‘in the search of knowledge’ both within and beyond eastern Africa, especially by new recruits to the emerging Qādiriyya and Shādhiliyya Sufi sects. Comorians sought learning in Zanzibar, whereas Muslims in

Madagascar went to the Comoros. Converts from the mainland, and from as far south as Mozambique, sought out teachers in Zanzibar, Mombasa and Lamu (Farsy 1989). The trans-oceanic *rihlāt* typically had itineraries that included the Ḥaḍramawt, the Ḥijāz (often as part of performing the *ḥajj*), Egypt, in some cases the Levant, and Istanbul. In general, they describe spiritual journeys, emphasising encounters with learned men, tomb visitations and *ijāzas* (certificates of learning) acquired or given. The typical eastern African Sufi *rihla* also contain descriptions of rituals in which the traveller participated, such as the reading of a certain text in the company of other scholars, *mawlid* recitations, or ritualised tomb visitations (Loimeier 2009; Bang 2014a). Also typically, these rituals are accounted for at length, with detailed lists of people who were present at the occasion. Miraculous events are also a common feature, at least for those written within the Sufi paradigm. The *rihla* is also – with some notable exceptions – relatively devoid of actual descriptions of physical landscapes and/or buildings; in general, these serve merely as backdrop to the perceived spiritual boons of the journey.

p.563

The travel accounts that we have from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries clearly point to the importance of the journey itself (by steamship, and later also by plane) as a series of encounters that were related in order to boost the traveller's authority upon return (Bang 2003). However, the *rihla* could also contain negative judgement upon the peoples and practices the traveller met en route, as for example the traveller Muḥammad 'Abu Ḥārith' al-Barwānī who toured the Middle East in 1914, and who was less than impressed with Egyptian culture, finding it decadent and shabby (Reese 2004).

The later Shāf'ī *qāḍī* of Zanzibar, 'Umar b. Sumayṭ (1886–1976, son of the aforementioned Aḥmad b. Sumayṭ), was one such traveller. He toured the Ḥaḍramawt in 1920–1, when he was 34 years old. This was a *bildungsreise* (educational journey), where the still quite young 'Umar was touring the land of the forefathers and pious 'Alawī Sufis. He starts his account with the departure by steamer from Zanzibar, which took place in the afternoon on 24 Rabī' I 1339/5 December 1920, after gathering with other scholars to pray for safe journey. His description shows how the journey itself was a time for visits, or what we today might call networking – which again is formative of authority:

We spent the entire night at sea, and by morning [on the 25 Rabī' I], we were at anchor off Mombasa. I descended to enter [the city] where I met with several scholars, including Shaykh Sulaymān b. 'Alī al-Mazrū'ī. I went with him to his house, and we sat down until it was time for *jum'a* prayers, so we went there. He gave me good advice [...].

(‘Umar b. Aḥmad b. Sumayṭ 1988: 16.)

The pattern was repeated on the return journey, when he again stopped in Mombasa and al-Mazrū'ī praised the wisdom he had achieved.

The emphasis on esoteric learning and acquired *baraka* waned as the twentieth century progressed, and ‘travel in the search of knowledge’ increasingly came to mean Islamic learning in the modernist, exoteric sense – often with a strong emphasis on the Arabic language. In the latter half of the twentieth century, educational travel was also identified as one of the main ‘gathering points’ for the spread of Wahhabism and/or Salafism. The young men returning from Saudi Arabia (whether from the *hajj* or prolonged periods of study) is a *leitmotif* in much of the literature on Salafi/Wahhabi movements in eastern Africa, and the efforts of the various colonial and post-colonial governments to curb their influence is another (Turner 2009).

Conclusion

Islam in the Swahili world has deep roots, both local and translocal. The earliest period is known mainly from archaeology and sparse textual accounts (Horton and Chami, this volume). A deeper analysis is possible for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, based on textual sources from the broader Shāfi‘ī Sunni arena in which the Swahili participated. Swahili Islam and its associated authority structures were in this period closely connected to developments within the broader and increasingly integrated Muslim world. The spread of ideas, such as reformist-oriented Sufism, took place through migration, re-connecting of old and new family links, and through the ever faster circulation of text. Last, but not least, eastern African Muslims increasingly travelled to seek more and deeper scriptural-based knowledge, both within the region and to the scholarly centres of the Islamic world. Muslims in eastern Africa took part in a multi-directional flow of knowledge that was produced and consumed in different centres. Through the same channels (and still very much multi-directional) came the intellectual re-orientations that followed, from a mild rejection of Sufi ‘superstitions’ in the early twentieth century, to the Wahhabist/Salafist trends of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

p.564

References

- Bang, A. K. 2003. *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea: Family Networks in East Africa, 1860–1925*. London: Routledge.
- Bang, A. K. 2011. ‘Authority and piety, writing and print: a preliminary study of Islamic texts in late 19th and early 20th century Zanzibar’. *Africa* 81: 63–81.
- Bang, A. K. 2014a. *Ripples of Reform: Islamic Sufi Networks in the Western Indian Ocean*. Leiden: Brill.
- Bang, A. K. 2014b. ‘The Riyadha Mosque manuscript collection in Lamu: a Ḥaḍramī

- tradition in Kenya'. *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 5 (2): 1–29.
- Bang, A. K. 2015. 'Localizing Islamic knowledge: acquisition and copying in the Riyadh Mosque manuscript collection in Lamu, Kenya'. In *From Dust to Digital: Ten Years of the Endangered Archives Programme*, edited by Maja Kominko, 55–88. London: Open Book Publishers.
- Becker, F. 2008. *Becoming Muslim in Mainland Tanzania, 1890–2000*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bonate, L. J. K. 2016. 'Islam and literacy in northern Mozambique: historical records on the secular uses of the Arabic script'. *Islamic Africa* 7 (1): 60–80.
- Euben, R. L. 2006. *Muslim and Western Travellers in the Search of Knowledge*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Farsy, A. S. 1989. *Baadhi ya Wanavyoni wa Kishafii wa Mashariki ya Afrika/The Shafi'i Ulama of East Africa, ca. 1830–1970: A Hagiographical Account*. Trans., ed. and annotated by Randall L. Pouwels, University of Wisconsin, African Primary Text Series, III.
- Freitag, U. 2003. 'Der Orientalist und der Mufti: kulturkontakt im Mekka des 19. Jahrhunderts'. *Die Welt des Islams* 43 (1): 37–60.
- Ghazal, A. 2010. *Islamic Reform and Arab Nationalism: Expanding the Crescent from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean (1880s–1930s)*. London: Routledge.
- Glassman, J. 1995. *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856–1888*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Green, N. 2013. *Bombay Islam: The Religious Economy of the West Indian Ocean*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ho, E. 2006. *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Horton, M. C. 2001. 'The Islamic conversion of the Swahili Coast 750–1500: some archaeological and historical evidence'. In *Islam in East Africa: New Sources: Archives, Manuscripts and Written Historical Sources, Oral History, Archaeology. International Colloquium, Rome, 2–4 December 1999*, edited by B. S. Amoretti, 449–69. Freiburg: Herder Publishers.
- Horton, M. C. 2013. 'Ibadis in East Africa: archaeological and historical evidence'. In *Oman and Overseas*, edited by M. Hoffmann-Ruf and A. Al Salimi, 3, 4, 8, 10, 12. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag AG.
- Insoll, T. 2003. *The Archaeology of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lienhardt, P. 1959. 'The mosque college of Lamu and its social background'. *Tanzania Notes and Records* 53: 228–42.
- Loimeier, R. 2003. 'Patterns and peculiarities of Islamic reform in Africa'. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33 (3): 237–62.
- Loimeier, R. 2009. *Between Social Skills and Marketable Skills: The Politics of Islamic Education in*

Twentieth Century Zanzibar. Leiden: Brill.

- Martin, B. G. 1971. 'Notes on some members of the learned class of Zanzibar and East Africa in the nineteenth century'. *African Historical Studies* 4 (3): 525–45.
- Martin, B. G. 1975. 'Arab migration to East Africa in medieval times'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 7 (3): 367–90.
- p.565
- Martin, B. G. 1976. *Muslim Brotherhoods in Nineteenth-Century Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mathews, N. 2013. 'Imagining Arab communities: colonialism, Islamic reform, and Arab identity in Mombasa, Kenya, 1897–1933'. *Islamic Africa* 4 (2): 135–63.
- McIntosh, J. 2009. *The Edge of Islam: Power, Personhood and Ethnoreligious Boundaries on the Kenya Coast*. Chapel Hill: Duke University Press.
- Pouwels, R. L. 1987. *Horn and Crescent: Cultural Exchange and Traditional Islam on the East African Coast, 800–1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Reese, S. 2004. 'The adventures of Abū Ḥārith: Muslim travel writing and navigating the modern in colonial East Africa'. In *The Transmission of Learning in Islamic Africa*, edited by S. Reese, 244–56. Leiden: Brill.
- Schacht, J. 1978. 'Sayyid Aḥmad Zaynī Daḥlān'. *Encyclopedia of Islam* 2. Leiden: Brill.
- Sharkey, H. 1994. 'Aḥmad Zaynī Daḥlān's al-Futuḥāt al-Islāmiyya: a contemporary view of the Sudanese Mahdī'. *Sudanic Africa* 5, 67–75.
- Turner, S. 2009. "'These young men show no respect for local customs": globalisation and Islamic revival in Zanzibar'. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 39 (3): 237–61.
- 'Umar b. Aḥmad b. Sumayṭ 1955. *Al-Nafḥat al-Shadhdhiyya min al-Diyār al-Ḥaḍramiyya wa-ṭalbiyyat al-ṣawt min al-Ḥijāz wa-Ḥaḍramawt*, privately printed, Tarim/Aden (?). Second, revised and annotated edition: 1988. *Al-Nafḥat al-Shadhdhiyya ilā al-Diyār al-Ḥaḍramiyya wa-ṭalbiyyat al-ṣawt min al-Ḥijāz wa-Ḥaḍramawt*, privately printed, Jiddah. [Note change in title from 'min' to 'ilā al-Diyār al-Ḥaḍramiyya'. Reference is made to 1988 edition.]

49

THE LEGACY OF SLAVERY ON THE SWAHILI COAST

Lydia Wilson Marshall and Herman Kiriama

Introduction: slavery and abolition in East Africa

While slavery and the slave trade hold a time-deep history in eastern Africa – spanning more than 2,000 years (Beachey 1976: 3) – plantation slavery did not coalesce as a regional economic system until the nineteenth century. Then, prior economic dependence on the export of captives gave way to a system in which more slave labour was retained for the production of export crops, including cloves in Zanzibar and oil-producing grains on the Kenyan coast (Kiriama 2009: 107). This localisation of the slave economy was engendered in large part by British abolitionist efforts. Under British pressure, Omani colonialists ratified treaties that prohibited the sale of slaves to Europeans, allowed the British Royal Navy to arrest all slaving vessels in the waters of the western Indian Ocean, and prohibited exportation and importation of enslaved captives along the eastern African coast. While the export slave trade withered under such restrictions, the system of plantation slave labour that replaced it proved more enduring. In 1897, the Sultan of Zanzibar issued a decree abolishing slavery on the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba; this proclamation was followed in 1907 by a British colonial ordinance affecting the mainland Kenyan coast. Slavery would not legally end for residents of German East Africa (later mainland Tanzania) until 1922, shortly after the region was ceded to British control.

Yet, of course, the history of abolition in eastern Africa is far from just a legal narrative, and the lived experiences of enslaved people reveal a more complicated and protracted process. Prior to legal abolition, both German and British colonists set up ransoming schemes through which enslaved people could contract with third parties to purchase their freedom. Ransoming began in German East Africa in 1901; typically, German planters contracted independently with enslaved labourers who pledged to work until the debt was repaid (Sunseri 1993: 481). In the 1870s, the Imperial British East Africa Company

(IBEAC) attempted to persuade runaway slaves in Kenya to work on company plantations as a means to purchase legal freedom from their owners (Cooper 1980: 50). European planters in both ransoming schemes faced disappointment, as workers often broke their contracts, ran away or simply refused service (Cooper 1980: 51; Sunseri 1993: 503; Deutsch 2006: 210). In addition, slaveholders' power decreased steadily under increasing British control, so that by the time abolition came in 1907, many slaves in Kenya had already freed themselves (Cooper 1987: 235).

p.567

While the end of slavery in eastern Africa began before legal abolition, so too did slavery persist in the region after its legal demise. On the island of Lamu, slave owners often accepted British compensation for their slaves while refusing in any practical terms to free them (Romero 1986: 500). Oral historians on the island reported a kind of *de facto* slavery, affecting entire families in Lamu, until Kenya's independence in 1963 (Romero Curtin 1983: 858). When asked when slavery ended, interviewees in Mikindani on the southern Tanzanian coast dated abolition to around the turn of the twentieth century (Deutsch 2011: 354). Farther north, in Songea, Tanzania, residents insisted that slavery had persisted until independence in 1961 (Deutsch 2011: 352). Notably, neither reported date coincides with legal abolition in German East Africa. Deutsch (2011) suggests that these discrepancies point to, in Mikindani's case, enslaved people's increasing ability to self-emancipate under German rule in the early twentieth century, whereas in Songea, interviewees are likely remembering forced labour schemes that arose under European colonialism and disproportionately affected ex-slaves.

As slavery lingered in the region, so too have its legacies – many of which persist in the twenty-first century. In this chapter, we review briefly how the region's history of slavery affected the labour market, land control and coastal politics. We then consider how enslaved people have shaped identity on the Swahili coast, with special attention paid to the means by which formerly enslaved women integrated into coastal communities. We conclude with a discussion of recent international and tourism-driven efforts to memorialise the slave trade and analyse how these articulate with local memories of slavery, a subject still discussed only with reticence by most eastern Africans.

Labour control and landlessness

Given the prior reluctance of ransomed, runaway and freed slaves to perform wage labour, local British and German colonial officials expressed anxiety that ex-slaves would refuse to work, and often opposed the abolition efforts of their national governments (Willis 1992: 83–4; Deutsch 2006: 108–10). After legal abolition, most Europeans continued to characterise ex-slaves as 'lazy', pointing to continuing conflict over the control of their

labour. Ex-slaves often found plantation work a less than appealing option; many instead relocated to areas where land was available to farm independently, some worked in railway construction and others moved to town to pursue urban wage labour (Cooper 1987: 229, 2000: 110, 121). Those who did remain on plantations often won major concessions from planters. In Pemba, many ex-slaves farmed independently for most of the year as squatters and participated in a short period of intense wage labour for their former owners during the clove harvest. With their power diminished by abolition, Omani plantation owners had to provide up to half of harvested cloves to their workers as compensation (Cooper 1980: 79). Europeans tried a variety of means to impel ex-slaves to engage in plantation wage labour, including legally limiting their movement, introducing new taxes and charging them with hazily defined crimes such as vagrancy (Cooper 1987: 240; Deutsch 2006: 219). In 1901, the British Slavery Commissioner of Pemba, J. T. Last, called on police to collect 'all vagrants and masterless men' to make them pick cloves (Cooper 1980: 111–12). Such attempts to control ex-slave labour are also closely entwined with colonial land distribution policy. Most ex-slaves were unable to legally acquire land under the British system and so remained squatters. Landlessness made them and their labour easier to control (Cooper 1980: 136).

The seeds for land dispossession on the coast can be traced to the late-nineteenth century. British territorial interest in the coast increased after the German East Africa Company acquired a large number of concessions there from the Omani Sultan of Zanzibar, between 1884 and 1885. In 1887, Sultan Barghash ceded the administration of much of his mainland territory to the British East African Association, excluding those southern portions of the coast that Britain recognised as administered by Germany. In 1890, Zanzibar itself became a British Protectorate, though local Omani Arab administration of the island continued. The territory known as the ten-mile coastal strip was first allotted to the Omani Sultan of Zanzibar in the 1886 Anglo-German Treaty. The strip originally stretched from the Ruvuma River on Tanganyika's southern border with Mozambique, to Kipini and the Lamu Archipelago on Kenya's northern coast (Mwaruvie 2011: 176). Britain's 1895 treaty with the sultan only applied to coastal land within Kenya. It would remain the legal possession of the sultan but would be administered by the British. For its part, Britain would ensure that subjects of the sultan in the area would enjoy freedom of religion and own land privately.

p.568

In 1908, British administrators passed the Land Titles Ordinance to facilitate land adjudication on the mainland coast and to separate private property from Crown land. The ordinance allowed only subjects of the sultan (mainly Arabs and Swahili Muslims) to register land as private property. The ordinance did not recognise communal ownership of land as indigenous people had, nor did it recognise claims by squatters, whose access to land was mediated through third parties such as former slave owners (Cooper 1980: 191). The ordinance therefore closed avenues via which indigenous people and ex-slaves could

make claims to land on the coastal belt (Kiriamia 2009: 119). To contain indigenous people, the British administration introduced 'Native Reserves' where land could not be transferred to private individuals; private land ownership was reserved for those groups whom the British could envision as landlords (Cooper 1980: 221). A lack of legal standing made it risky for ex-slaves to invest in the land that they worked. In 1915 a group of ex-slaves who had independently farmed a tract of land north of Malindi for 13 years was forced to start paying rent when the owner showed up to demand it (Cooper 1980: 183). The legal burden of landlessness manifested in other ways as well. Since indigenous people could not own agricultural land, colonial laws required any 'native' carrying produce to prove that he or she had not stolen it (Cooper 1987: 242).

The legacy of Kenya's colonial land policies has extended far into the era of independence. In the early 1960s, as it became apparent that Kenya would become independent, the people of the ten-mile coastal strip – who were still legally subjects of the Sultan of Zanzibar, though governed by the British – started to solicit for self-rule. As a result of this agitation and at the request of the Sultan of Zanzibar, in 1961 the British government appointed James W. Robertson to look into what should be done with the coastal strip as Kenya gained independence. Robertson recommended its incorporation into Kenya before independence, so long as the private land rights of the sultan's subjects were entrenched in the constitution. Jomo Kenyatta, Kenya's then Prime Minister, conceded to these demands and promised to adjudicate and register such rights where not settled. This agreement codified colonial land inequities, turning many indigenous people, as well as ex-slaves, again into the squatters or tenants of Arab and Swahili landowners (Kanyinga 1998: 10; Kiriamia 2009: 120).

In the early twentieth century, many coastal landowners had permitted ex-slaves and some indigenes to continue occupying their land. With Kenya's independence, certain landowners began more formally to rent out their property; many others did not. With no owners in sight, indigenes and slave descendants continued to occupy what they thought was public land. When coastal tourism intensified in the mid-1980s, land prices rose sharply; the descendants of landowners began to come back to lay claim to their property. Only at this point did many indigenous and slave descendant families come to realise that they were living on other people's land. This disjuncture in ownership is at the root of the social inequality that continues to divide the coast.

p.569

In Tanzania, President Julius Nyerere's *ujamaa* programme, which included communal land ownership and cooperative agriculture, was inspired in part by the stark economic inequities that slavery had wrought. Nyerere argued,

All human beings, be they children brought up in poor or rich families, or belonging to sinners or saints, *or even those whose parents are either slaves or free men*, were born to find land in existence. They can neither add to it [n]or reduce its extent. It is God's gift, given to all His creation without any discrimination.

Whatever the socialist idealism espoused by Nyerere, economic and social inequities persisted after independence. Class, ethnic and religious divisions today continuing to bely Tanzania's ideal of national unity (Hill-Yates 2012: 117). With the *ujamaa* agricultural system long since abandoned, the economic wellbeing of most slave descendants continues to be lower than that of other coastal residents (for example, Walz 2009: 28–32).

Politics and racialisation

When the anti-colonial political party TANU (Tanganyika African National Union) called for *uhuru sasa* ('freedom now'), *uhuru* was 'conceived both as political sovereignty and as liberation from slavery' (Peterson 2010: 2). This rhetorical use of *uhuru* was part of a broader nationalist strategy in the 1950s and 1960s in which TANU linked British rule in Tanganyika (mainland Tanzania) to earlier regional memories of slavery (Deutsch 2011: 355). In Zanzibar, similar political rhetoric was developing in the mid-twentieth century against Omani Arab political domination; indeed, analogies with slavery were often invoked by upcountry immigrants or local indigenous people whose ancestors were never themselves enslaved (Glassman 2010: 180). At this same time, a more radical and racialised nationalism was emerging that would culminate with the deaths of thousands of Arabs, and the politicised rape of Arab women during the Zanzibar Revolution of 1964 (Glassman 2011: 3, 142, 279). While some scholars argue that British colonialist 'enthusiasm' for racial categories helped to shape eastern African racial conceptions (Willis and Gona 2013: 53), Glassman (2004: 724) has complicated such linear interpretations. He simultaneously casts Zanzibar's independence-era racist politics as the creation of the local intelligentsia and as rooted in the earlier Omani colonial slave-holding era (2000: 402). When leaders from Zanzibar's African-dominated Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP) called black skin 'a precious gift' from God (Glassman 2000: 417), or demanded forced marriages with local Arab women as a means of 'racial leveling' (Glassman 2011: 142), they were both acknowledging and attempting to subvert racial hierarchies born in the Omani colonial slavocracy.

On the Kenyan coast, mid-twentieth-century politics were equally tumultuous though considerably less violent. The *mwambao* ('coastline') secessionist political movement was born largely from fear of political domination by upcountry peoples (Brennan 2008: 832). However, anti-*mwambao* politicians suggested that 'Arabs' might reintroduce slavery were the ten-mile strip ceded to them (Brennan 2008: 856). Even today, political anxiety about the coast's relationship to more interior areas in Kenya continues to reverberate. In 2005 an emergent secessionist organisation, the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC), detailed a list of grievances in an open letter to Queen Elizabeth II. These included poor educational opportunities, the domination of upcountry people in the public sector and

historical land grabs (Willis and Gona 2013: 62). Many coastal people continue to protest the migration of upcountry people onto local lands that the Kenyan government has deemed ‘unoccupied’. The MRC’s slogan, *Pwani si Kenya* (‘the coast is not Kenya’), is ironically based on the colonially entrenched ten-mile coastal strip concept (Kiriamia 2009: 121; Willis and Gona 2013: 49–50). The MRC has invoked colonial-era treaties about the strip as supporting their claim to an independent Kenyan coast, demonstrating how such ‘arcane knowledge [is susceptible] to subversive reinterpretation’ (Willis and Gona 2013: 71).

p.570

Ethnicity, identity and belonging

Underlying continuing political tension on the coast is broader anxiety about identity, ethnicity and legitimacy. The widespread integration of ex-slaves into coastal communities and their adoption of local ethnonyms complicate local understandings of indigeneity. After abolition, some ex-slaves embraced the ethnic identities of their natal homelands (Nyasa, Yao, Manyema, etc.); however, incorporation into coastal and hinterland groups was much more typical (Cooper 1980: 166; Fair 1998: 65).

Swahili integration

One Swahili proverb intones, *Timba, timba utatimbua mawi* (‘Dig, dig, you will dig up shit!’), warning those who would poke into local genealogies that most people in Swahili communities have some slave ancestry (Eastman 1994: 103). Certainly, the children of enslaved concubines, who typically inherited the ethnic identity and legal status of their slaveholder fathers, led to some admixture between free and enslaved groups. Larger-scale identity shifts for formerly enslaved people began with abolition. In the nineteenth century, a claim to a Swahili identity had indicated a freeborn coastal indigene. Indeed, Swahili elites often themselves owned slaves. Around the turn of the twentieth century, census records indicate that many ex-slaves began to claim Swahili ethnicity (Cooper 1980: 159). By World War I, so many ex-slaves had adopted the ethnonym that Swahili identity itself started to become associated with slave heritage (Deutsch 2006: 231). In some parts of the coast, ‘Swahili’ maintains this negative connotation, and vulgar or uncouth behaviour may be met with a contemptuous *‘We, Mswahili, we!’* (‘You Swahili you!’; Fair 1998: 75). By the 1920s and 1930s, the number of people claiming membership in other coastal indigene groups (Hadimu, Tumbatu, Pemba, Shirazi, etc.) increased in the census, while the number of those identifying as Swahili dropped – suggesting a shift in ex-slave ethnicity claims (Cooper 1980: 163; Fair 1996: 150–1).

Shifts in identity are not achieved simply by assertion to a census taker, but rather

through concrete and everyday actions. Before abolition, slaveholders had put considerable effort into visibly marking enslaved people as subordinate. The distinction between free and slave on the coast was often couched as the difference between ‘civilised’ people and ‘barbarians’ (Eastman 1994). To mark slaves as different from – and lesser than – free patricians, they might be forbidden from covering their heads, wearing shoes or donning sewn clothing (Fair 1998: 65, 68; Glassman 2011: 186; Nyanhoga *et al.* 2014: 50). Under slavery, many tried to disassociate from the *mshenzi* (barbarian) slave identity by strategically appropriating aspects of coastal culture (for example, Glassman 1991, Deutsch 2011: 345). With abolition, such appropriation increased dramatically as ex-slaves adopted previously prohibited coastal clothing (Deutsch 2006: 231; McMahon 2013: 130). The ability of formerly enslaved women to veil was especially important in promoting claims to piety and decency (Deutsch 2006: 67). While we should not oversimplify the role of material culture in identity claims, it is nonetheless clear that emancipated people negotiated and resisted their low social status. For example, ex-slave men attempted to participate in more public rituals of Islam (Fair 2001: 18). Such religious performances sometimes engendered conflict with freeborn people, as did ex-slaves’ more general participation in public life (Romero 1986: 507).

p.571

Some scholars have read these identity shifts (from ‘slave’ to ‘Swahili’, and ‘Swahili’ to ‘Shirazi’) from an instrumentalist perspective. Certainly, one’s ethnicity in twentieth-century eastern Africa had practical effects – for example, on land ownership under British colonialism (Cooper 1980: 162). During World War II, the British rationing system also favoured certain groups’ claims to rice; some have suggested slave descendants’ increased association with Shirazi identity could have been motivated by greater access to this prized coastal food (for example, Fair 2001: 50). Glassman refutes such interpretations, noting that the shift toward Shirazi identity began much earlier than World War II, in the 1920s and early 1930s (Glassman 2000: 403–4).

Instrumentalist explanations additionally tend to oversimplify the process of identity shift; identities, after all, are not simply adopted through individual choice but, rather, are also arbitrated by one’s larger community. McMahon (2006, 2013) has analysed post-abolition identity shifts in Pemba in some detail. The majority of Pemba’s population had been enslaved prior to abolition. In a community where almost everyone knew each other’s ancestry, how was it possible to shed slave heritage? McMahon (2006: 215) suggests by the development of a reputation of *heshima* (honour), ex-slaves were able to cultivate new social and ethnic identities. *Heshima* represented ideals such as trustworthiness, Muslim piety and helpfulness (McMahon 2006: 200). Importantly, one could not individually decide if one possessed *heshima*; this claim was arbitrated by the larger community (McMahon 2006: 214) and could be achieved only over time. A reputation of *heshima* was much more than an abstraction in post-abolition Pemba; it could have significant, tangible consequences – affecting one’s ability to secure credit before

harvest time, or find community support against legal claims by former masters.

Giriamaa integration

In the region, belonging – rather than freedom *per se* – is best conceptualised as the opposite of slavery (for example, McMahon 2006: 200). In abolition, former slaves sought family connection not just through blood and marriage but also friendship (McMahon 2013: 193, 196). In Kenya's nineteenth-century coastal hinterland, blood brotherhood ceremonies allowed unrelated men to pledge familial loyalty to one another (Herlehy 1984). Such networked kinship helped ex-slaves reduce their vulnerability to claims over their property or person by former slave owners. In the 1800s, Giriamaa groups were particularly active in the incorporation of outsiders into their ranks, with the number of Giriamaa people increasing from an estimated 5,000 in the first half of the nineteenth century to 60,000 in the 1890s (Willis and Miers 1997: 486). This expansion was in part supported by the purchase of enslaved captives, who then typically integrated into the families of Giriamaa men seeking to challenge the authority of their elders, find followers and secure the necessary agricultural labour force to establish independent homesteads (Willis and Miers 1997: 488). Some scholars have argued that such integration stopped with the advent of British colonial rule, as new taxes significantly increased the cost of maintaining dependents (Willis and Miers 1997: 492). However, other research suggests that at least some Giriamaa communities continued to incorporate former slaves, including runaway slaves, until at least the early twentieth century (Tinga 2012; Marshall 2015).

Ex-slaves did not simply become Giriamaa or Swahili, but also helped to shape these group's cultures and identities. For instance, in the Malindi area, ex-slaves introduced the culture of masquerades commonly known as *kinyago*, a funerary dance consisting of zoomorphic figures, to the Giriamaa people. Former slaves constructed the *kinyago* as a powerful cult governed by an ascetic code known as *mzinda* (Tinga 2012: 38). As practised in Malindi, *kinyago* shares very close similarities to masquerade cultures found in Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique and southeastern Tanzania. This is instructive because most of the slaves in Kenya are believed to have been brought from Nyasa, the region around present-day Lake Malawi. To cement relations with the Giriamaa people, ex-slaves passed the Mkokoani Declaration in 1945, in which they formally entrusted the *kinyago* tradition to the Mijikenda (including the Giriamaa), who in turn embraced and domesticated it. However, the declaration made clear that what was to be shared was the basic knowledge and skill of the *kinyago*, and not the religious and spiritual milieu; the ex-slaves would continue to control the *mzinda* and its mysteries (Tinga 2012: 64). The Mkokoani Declaration not only ensured the continuity of the *kinyago* tradition but 'enabled the former slaves to gain higher status in [Giriamaa] society' (Tinga 2012: 62). Ex-slave women seeking entry into and elevation in Swahili society also deployed their expertise in ritual and dance, as discussed below.

Gender and abolition

Abolition in eastern Africa, like slavery before it, was a highly gendered experience. Concubines, for instance, faced special complications in their legal and social status in the post-abolition period. While even under slavery concubines were technically free once they had produced children recognised by their masters, in practice this often simply meant that they could not be legally sold (Deustch 2006: 69). Early abolition decrees explicitly excluded concubines (Strobel 1979: 51). Most remained in a pattern of dependence until at least 1922, and some remained so long after slavery's legal demise in the region. Recent research has challenged earlier hegemonic views that concubines universally loved and were loved by their owners (for example, Romero Curtin 1983: 876), since some concubines absconded (McMahon 2013: 213) and others attempted to ransom themselves (Sunseri 1993: 500).

While concubines may be a special case, the challenge they faced in abolition was shared by many female ex-slaves – specifically, the difficulty of navigating patriarchal structures of coastal society, where both slaves and women occupied subordinate positions (Strobel 1979: 43). Formerly enslaved women remained more vulnerable to economic exploitation and social alienation than their male counterparts (McMahon 2006: 216). Many ex-slave women sought a more secure position in coastal society through their control over the dances and rituals that accompanied Swahili female puberty initiation and wedding festivities (for example, *unyago*, *mkinda*, *lelemama*). Though now considered quintessentially Swahili, such dances and rituals, which began under slavery, trace their origins to cultural traditions from the natal homelands of enslaved people (Fair 1996: 151; Strobel 1979: 133). Often, freeborn and ex-slave women participated together at such occasions (Fair 1996: 161). Similarly, Swahili women's spiritual possession cults, which originated in slaves' homelands (Gower *et al.* 1996: 263), were frequented by both ex-slave and freeborn women in the abolition period and offered one of very few opportunities for elite freeborn women to engage in public life (Gower *et al.* 1996: 260).

Conclusion: memory and memorialisation

Few coastal eastern Africans now admit slave descent (for example, Marshall 2015: 279), yet the integrative processes that absorbed so many ex-slaves and their progeny were not all encompassing. For example, recent research on Kenya's south coast indicates that some residents continue to suffer stigma and exclusion because of their slave ancestry. Many such descendants have not adopted local ethnonyms, lack government identity cards and are grouped as 'others' in the population census. They are not recognised as an ethnic

group in Kenya; this lack of recognition has led to their exclusion from many services offered by the government and affected their access to education, health care and jobs (Kiriamia 2009: 234; Kiriamia 2014: 244; Nyanchoga *et al.* 2014). Those who adopted coastal or hinterland ethnicities also remained vulnerable to the stigma of slave heritage. Even today, such ancestry often remains an open secret – little discussed but still well-known to the community at large. As Marshall notes, ‘since allegations of slave ancestry imply both low social standing and outsider status, they may be used to undercut an individual’s or a family’s authority’ (2015: 279). In 2009, many Bagamoyo interviewees expressed the (false) belief that it is illegal in Tanzania to make such claims against other people (Hill-Yates 2012: 107–8).

p.573

Eastern Africans’ general reticence to discuss slave ancestry stems from the perceived power and malignancy of such knowledge (for example, Romero 1986: 505; Hill-Yates 2012: 120). This long-standing aversion, like some residents’ insistence that slavery never even existed on the coast (for example, Deutsch 2011: 345–6; Marshall 2015: 279), has been complicated by recent efforts to memorialise the slave trade. The dominance of international funding for memorialisation projects (especially UNESCO’s Slave Routes Project) has led in some instances to the replacement of local understandings of slavery with narratives designed for wider global consumption (for example, Croucher 2015: 363, 365). Increased international and domestic tourist interest has also shaped the memorialisation of places associated with the slave trade (for example, Kiriamia 2009; Glassman 2010: 177–8). The stories most often recounted to tourists – of chained confinement and idle brutality – align with perceptions of slavery elsewhere in the world, but depart from most local historical understandings. In addition, the recent move toward greater memorialisation of the slave trade has not encouraged concomitant local interest in cultivating more open and frank discussions of slavery’s history in the region.

The continued underrepresentation of slave heritage on the Swahili coast is in part a result of the power relations this history embodies. While Britain used abolitionist rhetoric in the nineteenth century to justify its colonial aspirations in eastern Africa, British colonialists nonetheless condoned the use of slave labour. The Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) used hundreds of enslaved porters for expeditions and caravans, and these workers’ wages were often paid directly to their owners (Morton 1990: 138). Due to their own dependence on slave labour, the IBEAC found it difficult to institute policies that weakened slavery on Kenya’s mainland and instead adopted a gradualist approach to abolition. After abolition, colonial forced-labour schemes as well as oppressive taxes designed to impel ‘native’ labour also disproportionately affected ex-slaves (for example, Cooper 1980: 93–7; for German East Africa, see Deutsch 2006: 219). This muddled narrative, with slavery and colonialism together creating a palimpsest of exploitation, complicates the production of a straightforward public history of abolition in the region.

Post-colonial governments, on the other hand, today ignore the subject because it is perceived as peripheral to national history. Kenya and Tanzania's current relative silence on slavery contrasts with the prevalence of slavery rhetoric in the independence era. Giblin (2005: 255) argues that, as modern Tanzania leaves its socialist past, it is at the same time grappling with a new globalised capitalist market order that casts 'inequality, dispossession and suffering . . . as necessary medicine which the nation must take to achieve prosperity'. Since exploitation is naturalised in this view, discussion of the slavery's ills is considered unnecessary. Likewise, in Kenya, the national government is much more apt to link the secessionist Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) to the Somali Islamist terrorist organisation al-Shabaab, than to Kenya's own history of slavery and colonialism (Botha 2014: 4). The MRC, however, strongly contrasts al-Shabaab in its religiously plural membership, including a sizable Christian minority. In a recent study, none of 45 MRC members interviewed listed religion as their primary reason for joining the organisation, instead pointing to ethnic solidarity and economic dispossession (Botha 2014: 10); the political and economic alienation of coastal communities in Kenya has roots in both colonialism and slavery.

p.574

Descendants of slaveholders tend to imperialise the coast's history and rarely focus on slavery. When mentioned at all, slavery is characterised as benign, paternal and even loving (for example, Romero Curtin 1983). Arab motivations for glossing over slavery's brutality are fairly self-evident (for example, Walz 2009: 27–32); yet what of the more general aversion to discussing slavery on the coast? Under slavery, planters typically allowed their slaves to have a portion of land, where they cultivated food crops and sold the surplus to support themselves (Cooper 1980: 275). This policy both perpetuated slaves' dependency on their owners and cast masters as benevolent patriarchs. Slave owners, most of whom were Muslims, also used Islam as a means of legitimatising enslavement. This Islamic framework created a binary mode of existence for slaves: they were both outsiders and insiders, and could improve their status within their masters' community through religious participation (Glassman 1991). The (partial) incorporation of enslaved people into masters' households may explain why most people of slave descent are reluctant to talk about the existence of slavery on the coast, as doing so may be perceived as being disrespectful to 'benevolent' masters and also would shame the broader coastal communities of which slave descendants are now a part (Kiriana 2009: 194). There is a general fear that discussion of slavery will open wounds that may be difficult to heal. However, the legacies of slavery that we have outlined here – including land dispossession, political alienation, racialisation and continued stigma against slave descent – will never resolve if they are never discussed.

References

- Beachey, R. W. 1976. *The Slave Trade of Eastern Africa: A Collection of Documents*. New York: Barnes and Noble.
- Botha, A. 2014. 'Radicalisation in Kenya: recruitment to Al-Shabaab and the Mombasa Republican Council'. *Institute for Security Studies Paper* 265: 1–26.
- Brennan, J. R. 2008. 'Lowering the Sultan's flag: sovereignty and decolonization in coastal Kenya'. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50 (4): 831–61.
- Cooper, F. 1980. *From Slaves to Squatters: Plantation Labor and Agriculture in Zanzibar and Coastal Kenya, 1890–1925*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Cooper, F. 1987. 'Contracts, crime, and agrarian conflict: from slave to wage labor on the East African coast'. In *Labour, Law, and Crime: An Historical Perspective*, edited by F. Snyder and D. Hay, 228–52. London: Tavistock Publications.
- Cooper, F. 2000. 'Conditions analogous to slavery: imperialism and free labor ideology in Africa'. In *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies*, edited by F. Cooper, T. C. Holt and R. J. Scott, 107–50. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Croucher, S. 2015. 'Visible people, invisible slavery: plantation archaeology in East Africa'. In *The Archaeology of Slavery: A Comparative Approach to Captivity and Coercion*, edited by L. W. Marshall, 347–74. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Deutsch, J. G. 2006. *Emancipation without Abolition in German East Africa, c. 1884–1914*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Deutsch, J. G. 2011. 'Memory, oral history and the end of slavery in Tanzania: some methodological considerations'. In *Slavery in Africa: Archaeology and Memory*, edited by P. J. Lane and K. C. MacDonald, 343–60. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Eastman, C. M. 1994. 'Service, slavery ("utumwa") and Swahili social reality'. *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere (AAP)* 37: 87–107.
- Fair, L. 1996. 'Identity, difference, and dance: female initiation in Zanzibar, 1890 to 1930'. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 17 (3): 146–72.

p.575

- Fair, L. 1998. 'Dressing up: clothes, class, and gender in post-abolition Zanzibar'. *Journal of African History* 39: 63–94.
- Fair, L. 2001. *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890–1945*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Giblin, J. 2005. 'The slave trade, the hegemony of paternalism, and their place in the national history of Tanzania'. In *Slave Routes and Oral Tradition in Southeastern Africa*, edited by B. Zimba, E. Alpers and A. Isaacman, 253–78. Maputo: Filsom Entertainment, Lda.
- Glassman, J. 1991. 'The bondsman's new clothes: the contradictory consciousness of slave resistance on the Swahili coast'. *Journal of African History* 32: 277–312.

- Glassman, J. 2000. 'Sorting out the tribes: the creation of racial identities in colonial Zanzibar's newspaper wars'. *Journal of African History* 41 (3): 395–428.
- Glassman, J. 2004. 'Slower than a massacre: the multiple sources of racial thought in colonial Africa'. *The American Historical Review* 109 (3): 720–54.
- Glassman, J. 2010. 'Racial violence, universal history, and echoes of abolition in twentieth-century Zanzibar'. In *Abolitionism and Imperialism in Britain, Africa, and the Atlantic*, edited by D. R. Patterson, 175–206. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Glassman, J. 2011. *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Gower, R., Salm, S. and Falola, T. 1996. 'Swahili women since the nineteenth century: theoretical and empirical considerations on gender and identity construction'. *Africa Today* 43 (3): 251–68.
- Herlehy, T. J. 1984. 'Ties that bind: palm wine and blood-brotherhood at the Kenya coast during the 19th century'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 17 (2): 285–308.
- Hill-Yates, E. A. 2012. 'Bearing the mark, bearing the costs: the consumption and production of slave memories and identities in coastal Tanzania, 1922–2008'. PhD diss., University of Illinois, Champaign.
- Kanyinga, K. 1998. 'Struggles of access to land: the "squatter question" in coastal Kenya'. *CDR Working Paper* 98: 7–21.
- Kiriama, H. O. 2009. 'Memory and heritage: the Shimoni slave caves in southern Kenya'. PhD diss., Deakin University.
- Kiriama, H. O. 2014. 'Mombasa slave heritage and the making of the western Indian Ocean: the case of Frere Town freed slave settlement, Mombasa'. In *Entretiens du Patrimoine de l'océan Indien [Maintenance of Heritage in the Indian Ocean]*, edited by A. Cheyssial, 241–8. Saint Denis, La Réunion: Montpellier.
- Kusimba, C. M. 2015. 'The impact of slavery on the East African political economy and gender relationships'. In *The Archaeology of Slavery: A Comparative Approach to Captivity and Coercion*, edited by L. W. Marshall, 230–54. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Marshall, L. W. 2015. 'Marronage and the politics of memory: fugitive slaves, interaction, and integration in nineteenth-century Kenya'. In *The Archaeology of Slavery: A Comparative Approach to Captivity and Coercion*, edited by L. W. Marshall, 276–99. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- McMahon, E. 2006. '"A Solitary Tree Builds Not": heshima, community, and shifting identity in post-emancipation Pemba Island'. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 39 (2): 197–219.
- McMahon, E. 2013. *Slavery and Emancipation in Islamic East Africa: From Honor to Respectability*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Morton, F. 1990. *Children of Ham: Freed Slaves and Fugitive Slaves on the Kenya Coast, 1873 to*

1907. Boulder: Westview Press.

Mwaruvie, J. M. 2011. 'The ten miles coastal strip: an examination of the intricate nature of land question at Kenyan coast'. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 1 (2): 176–82.

Nyanchoga, S., Kiriama, H., Abungu, P., Ballarin, M. and Moenga, S. (Eds) 2014. *Slave Heritage and Identity on the Kenya Coast*. Nairobi: Catholic University Press.

Nyerere, J. K. 1974. *Man and Development: Binadamu na Maendeleo*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Peterson, D. R. 2010. 'Introduction'. In *Abolitionism and Imperialism in Britain, Africa, and the Atlantic*, edited by D. R. Peterson, 1–37. Athens: Ohio University Press.

Romero, P. W. 1986. "'Where have all the slaves gone?": emancipation and post-emancipation in Lamu, Kenya'. *Journal of African History* 27 (3): 497–512.

Romero Curtin, P. 1983. 'Laboratory for the oral history of slavery: the island of Lamu on the Kenya coast'. *American Historical Review* 88 (4): 858–82.

Strobel, M. 1979. *Muslim Women in Mombasa, 1890–1975*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

p.576

Sunseri, T. 1993. 'Slave ransoming in German East Africa, 1885–1922'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 26 (3): 481–511.

Tinga, K. 2012. 'Secrets of slaves: the rise and decline of *Vinyago* masquerades in the Kenya coast (1907 to the present)'. MA thesis, University of the Western Cape.

Walz, J. 2009. 'Archaeologies of disenchantment'. In *Postcolonial Archaeologies in Africa*, edited by P. R. Schmidt, 21–38. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press.

Willis, J. 1992. *Mombasa, the Swahili, and the Making of the Mijikenda*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Willis, J. and Gona, G. 2013. 'Pwani C Kenya? Memory, documents and secessionist politics in coastal Kenya'. *African Affairs* 112 (446): 48–71.

Willis, J. and Miers, S. 1997. 'Becoming a child of the house: incorporation, authority and resistance in Giriama society'. *Journal of African History* 38: 479–96.

50

LIFE IN SWAHILI VILLAGES

Pat Caplan

Introduction

In this chapter I will focus on the village of Kanga¹ on northern Mafia Island, which I have come to know well since I first visited it half a century ago (Caplan 1975). At the same time, I will consider how some of its features are replicated in other villages of Mafia Island and elsewhere on the eastern African coast and islands of Tanzania and Kenya, and ways in which they differ. Some village settlements are of ancient origin, as attested by grave sites and mosques, others have grown up more recently and expanded as a result of political and economic changes. But it will also be the contention of this chapter that the boundaries and differences between villages and towns are less clear-cut than has often been imagined.

Mafia Island lies off the Rufiji Delta in southern Tanzania ([Figure 50.1](#)), an area whose coast has been less well described than more northerly maritime parts. It has never been a separate political entity, having variously formed part of the domain of Kilwa in early times, later coming under the control of the Sultan of Zanzibar, then the Germans followed by the British, before Tanzanian independence. There are settlement sites dating from all of these periods (Chittick 1961, 1974; Chami 1999, 2002; Christie 2011, this volume). During its period of Zanzibari Arab rule, the southern half of the island had a plantation economy, and the island still continues to produce large numbers of coconuts for export. But Mafia and its surrounding waters have more recently assumed importance in terms of fishing, and its rich waters are visited by fishermen from further afield on the coast, as well as by foreign vessels. Furthermore, like many parts of the coast, tourism now plays an important role, and on the island of Mafia there are some half dozen up-market hotels with visitors attracted, inter alia, by the existence of the Mafia Island Marine Park.

The focus here will be on ethnicity, ritual and livelihoods, and the final section will give the short life-histories of two families from northern Mafia, in order to show the

important links between different areas of the coast, and between town and country, with networks of trade, religion, education and marriage throughout this region. Such a flow of people along coast and islands has long been enabled by sea travel.



Conceptualisations of the Swahili coast: village, town and Swahili identity

When I began fieldwork on Mafia Island in the 1960s, the emphasis in east coastal studies was very much on villages, with a number of doctoral theses, monographs and articles produced over the next decade (Wijeyewardene 1959a, b, 1961; Bujra 1968; Caplan 1975, Landberg 1977). With a few notable exceptions such as Ghaidan on Lamu (1975), El Zein also on Lamu (1974) and Strobel on Mombasa (1979; also Mirza and Strobel 1989), there was less research emphasis on the Swahili towns. But in the 1990s the emphasis shifted to an interest in the ‘stonetowns’, with Middleton’s work (1992) focusing on the northern coast, as did that of Swartz on Mombasa (1991), a trend which continued into the new millennium with the work of Kresse on Mombasa (2007), Horton and Middleton (2000) on the merchants and towns of the northern half of the coast, as well as Parkin (1995a, b) and Larsen (2008) on Zanzibar Town. Much less work has been done on ‘stonetowns’ or villages further south.

In Swahili, the word for village is *kijiji* while that for town is *mji*. But many people who live in villages refer to these entities as ‘towns’. For example, someone out in the fields may say ‘I’m going to town’ (*nakwenda mjini*) and by this is meant the centre of the village, where are found shops, mosque, clinic and government office. Conversely, large towns or cities like Dar es Salaam contain villages within their boundaries, especially on the outskirts where small fields are mingled with houses. Furthermore, over time villages grow to become towns, or towns decay and are little more than villages. So the distinction between town and village is by no means clear cut.

What makes a village a village?

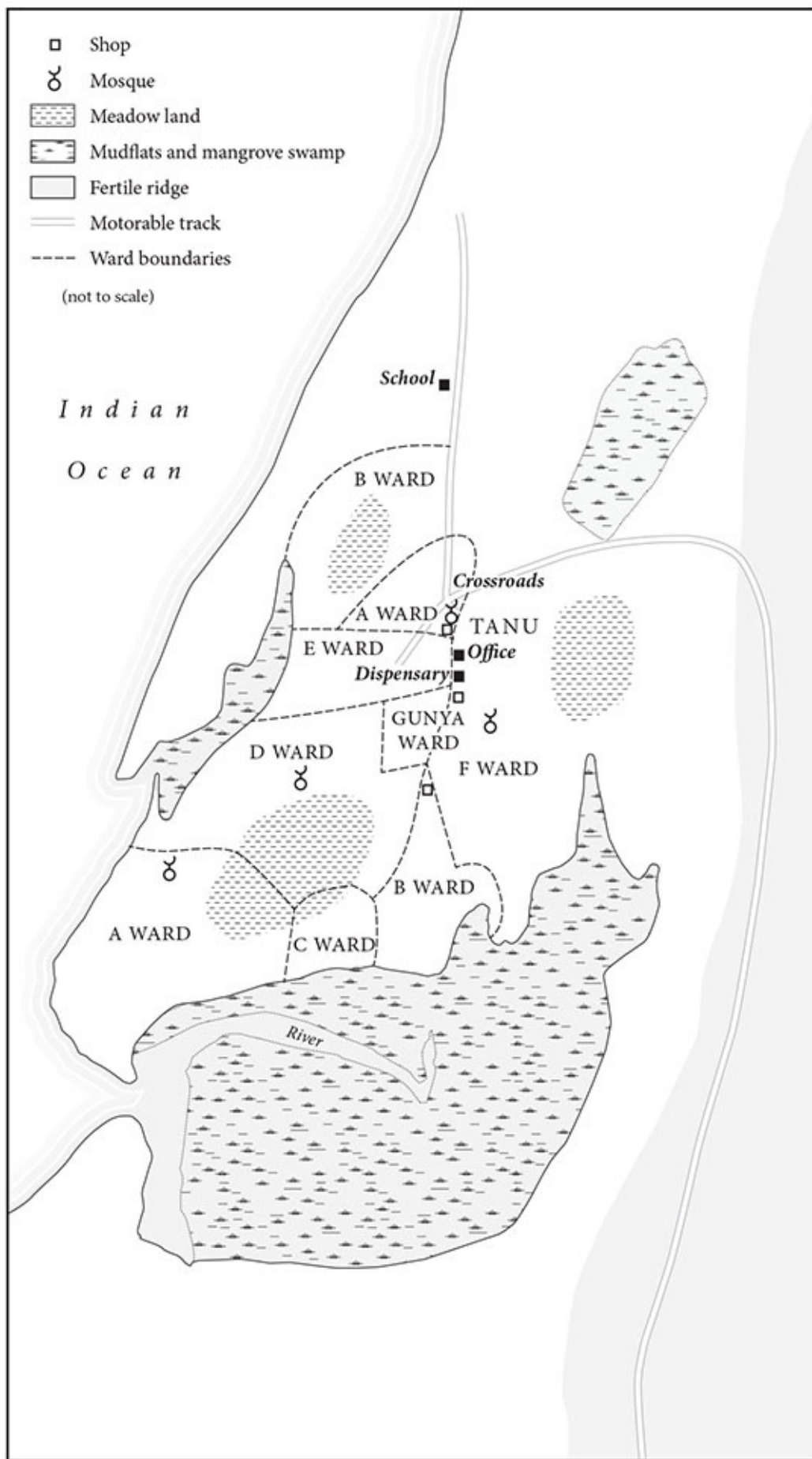
Settlement patterns

Kanga, like many coastal settlements, is a nucleated village whose centre has fairly densely packed houses, while in the outlying areas these are more scattered ([Figure 50.2](#)). In the centre one can find shops, Koran schools, a mosque, a primary health care clinic and the office of the CCM (Chama cha Mapinduzi, the ruling party in Tanzania). It is one of six nucleated villages in the north of Mafia Island, Tanzania, referred to locally as the ‘*miji sita*’ (‘six towns’: Kanga, Bweni, Banja, Kirongwe Jimbo and Mrali). Their settlement patterns are very different from the dispersed villages of the southern half of the island, which was

subjected to a colonial plantation economy under the Omani Arabs, the Germans and the British successively.

Like all of Mafia's northern villages, and other coastal villages elsewhere, Kanga is divided up into wards (*mitaa*) which are associated with cognatic descent groups (*makoo*), membership of which confers rights to residential land, and also to agricultural land on the outskirts of the villages (Caplan 1969, 1975). Within the wards are small hamlets often made up of the houses of close kin. Wards usually also contain grave sites, and often have their own mosque and Koran school (*madrasa*). Similar patterns of settlements and of descent were reported by Middleton for parts of Unguja (1961) and by Tanner (1960) for areas of the Tanzanian coast just before independence, but the existence of corporate groups holding land has only been reported for northern Mafia Island and for some parts of Unguja. Nonetheless, even people living in dispersed settlements may think of this entity as a village.

However, local conceptions of space and boundaries may not comply with those of the state. For example, in northern Mafia today, Kanga and Bweni villages form a single administrative unit, 'Kanga', for purposes of choosing a local district councillor. In turn they are part of the Northern Division of the island, which also includes Kirongwe (made up of Banja, Jimbo and Kirongwe villages) and Baleni (Chunguruma, Ndagoni, Baleni and Kungwi villages). This administrative amalgamation of villages runs counter to the historic rivalry between some villages, like Kanga and Bweni, which is still expressed in annual village rituals like 'encircling the village' (*kuzingua mji*) and the holding of a Maulid reading, where villages seek to outdo each other in the splendour of their preparations. Nowadays, villages also continue their friendly rivalry through football matches ([Figure 50.3](#)).





[Figure 50.3](#) Kanga football team

In southern Mafia, the influence of the coconut plantation economy first established by Arabs is much more pronounced. Here slaves were brought from the mainland and the area is more ethnically mixed than in the north. A few large plantations remain and migrants sometimes come from the mainland to seek work. Villages are highly dispersed, unlike in the north, with houses scattered among the coconut trees. There is much less bush land around the village.

Ethnicity and identity

Coastal ethnicity is complex, reflecting the area's chequered history and waves of migrants from many other parts of the world. Early Arab migrants came from the Gulf, and some remained and inter-married with local people. The islands of Zanzibar and the Kenyan 'ten mile strip' were ruled by Arabs originating from Oman, who set up clove plantations in the islands off the coast. On Mafia, some of these Arabs owned coconut plantations and held slaves, although the island was never ruled by Zanzibar. Arabs were the wealthiest stratum of society and also had the highest status, which was passed patrilineally to their offspring, even if their marriages were to African women. People of African descent were divided between the 'freeborn' (*waungwana*) and those of slave descent (*watumwa*); the latter were considered to be of the lowest status (Parkin and Constantin 1989; Marshall and Kiriamia, this volume).

During my early fieldwork in the 1960s, some people continued to claim Arab status but, later, at least in Tanzania and including Zanzibar, fewer people did so. On the

mainland this was because of the ideology of *ujamaa*, or African socialism, while in Zanzibar the legacy of the revolution, during which many 'Arabs' were killed, still lingered (Larsen 2003).

But there were and in some cases still are more localised versions of ethnic identity. In northern Mafia, for example, the population is divided between the Wambwera and the Wapokomo, with varying mixes through inter-marriage in all of the northern villages. But in the villages south of Kironawe, there is a much greater mix of peoples, since the south of the island has seen the in-migration of more mainlanders, some originally as slaves, but later as labourers seeking work on the plantations. Here again ethnic affiliation has changed depending on historical circumstances.

These are not uncommon patterns in many coastal villages, as Landberg (1977) and Bujra (1968) describe for villages on the Kenya coast, Widjeyewardene (1959a, b, 1961) for the Tanzania mainland coast, and Middleton (1961) and Racine (1994, 1995) for Unguja, where the main ethnic groups are the Wahadimu and Watumbatu.

p.582

Most recently, an influx of inland peoples, mostly Christian, coming to the coast in search of work or land has led to many complaints on the part of Muslim coastal people who feel that their culture and religion are being threatened, and who resent the loss of land to upcountry (*watu wa bara*) people.

As mentioned above, in some of the nucleated villages in northern Mafia, parts of Unguja and some other areas of the coast, there are also corporate descent groups (*makoo*) which hold land (Middleton 1961; Widjeyewardene 1961; Caplan 1975). These are based on descent through both parents, so that many people hold rights in the land of more than one group.

Religion and ritual

Historically, in most parts of the coast and islands, the majority of the inhabitants have been Muslims for many centuries. A defining aspect of village life is the presence of a Friday mosque which is used by the male inhabitants of the village once a week. This is differentiated from the other mosques which primarily serve local wards.

Most village mosques are simple structures that differ little from the wattle-and-daub houses in which most people live, but recently money has come in from Gulf countries and more elaborate buildings are being constructed. In Bweni, for example, at the time of my last visit in 2010 there was a new brick-built *madrasa*, and plans to construct a brick mosque for which money had come from Gulf states through the contacts of a village son who had become a 'big man' on the national stage. There was much talk in Kanga of the need to raise funding so that this village too would not feel ashamed of its own 'old-

fashioned' buildings.

In addition to Islamic practices such as Friday prayer, fasting for Ramadhan and sending one's children to the *madrassa*, many coastal residents also practice Sufi'ism and join its mystical orders (*tarika* – literally way or path), the main ones of which are Qadiriyya and Shadhiliyya (Nimtz 1980). On Mafia, the Sheikhs of both orders reside in the south of the island, but visit their followers in each village for the annual *ziara*. However, the main coastal pilgrimage centres are at opposite ends of the eastern African coast: Lamu town in northern Kenya, which is the site of a famous Maulid reading (Lienhardt 1959), and the small island of Kilwa Kisiwani in the south of Tanzania, where there is a famous Sheikh who holds a big *ziara*. In both places thousands of devotees gather from all over the coast and islands for the annual rituals, a pattern that still continues.

In many villages of the coast and islands, there are customary rituals that emphasise the unity of the village. One such is called '*kuzingua mji*', during which the village is circumambulated and a feast held. Another is the Swahili New Year, which marks the beginning of the agricultural calendar, or *Siku ya Mwaka*, a ritual that is also known in some parts of the coast as Nairuz (Nairuz is a Persian festival, and some coastal legends mention the arrival of people from Shiraz, Washirazi) or *Mwaka Kogwa* (bathing in the new year). In Kanga village, women and young people gather on the beach and bathe in the sea 'to wash away the old year', followed by a picnic of special rice cakes. On return to the village there is a dance attended mainly by youngsters. In Makunduchi village on Unguja, this event has become a popular tourist spectacle and is regularly shown on Zanzibar TV (Racine 1994, 1995).

Swahili culture also includes a belief in spirits that can play an important role in the lives of the living. Ancestors, for example, can punish descendants who do not show respect, and most people hold an annual recitation of the Koran at the graves of their ancestors. There are also other kinds of spirits, sometimes called *mizimu*, *mashaitani*, or *majini*, that inhabit rocks, trees or other natural features or, in the case of the last, the sea. All such spirits are localised and often associated with particular villages. For some spirits, it suffices to give offerings at their shrines (*mapanga*) but others are more demanding and seek possessory rituals with sacrifices of animals. Spirit possession is an important feature of Swahili culture, whether in town or country, and provides a way of explaining and dealing with illness and misfortune (Giles 1987; Caplan 1997; Nisula 1999; Larsen 2008).

p.583

In recent years, influenced by Wahabism emanating from the Gulf, there has been a growth in the 'new' Islam, which is critical of Sufi'ism and spirit possession. Styles of dress have changed, especially those of women who are considerably more covered up than previously (Caplan 2013, 2015).

How villagers make a living

Most coastal villages have a mixed economy, dependent on subsistence agriculture, cash crops such as coconuts, fishing and waged labour, especially in villages lying near to plantations or towns, or to tourist hotels ([Figure 50.4](#)). Inevitably the balance between these ways of making a living has changed over the half century during which I have known the coast.

In most coastal villages of eastern Africa, an important aspect of the local economy is subsistence agriculture, with food crops such as rice, sweet potatoes, cassava, vegetables and fruit being grown. Here much of the work is done by women. Kanga, like some other northern Mafia villages, is surrounded by a large belt of bush land cultivated on a rotating system. Each year, the bush has to be cut down and burned, a job primarily done by men, and then hoed, planted, weeded, guarded, and finally harvested by both women and men. But there is also low-lying wetland within the confines of the village that can be cultivated more or less continuously for rice and then sweet potatoes.



[Figure 50.4](#) Women cultivating wet land, Kanga

The Mafia District book (available at the Tanzania National Archives) shows that Mafia Island has not been self-sufficient in food since German times and locally produced food has been supplemented by imported food bought for cash in local shops. In Tanganyika, the policy of the German colonial authorities was to encourage the population to engage in cash cropping, and on Mafia Island this took the form of growing coconuts and, to a lesser extent, cashew nuts. Indeed, 'encourage' is perhaps the wrong word since I was told that every man had to plant at least 50 coconut trees on pain of corporal punishment (*kiboko* – the rhino-hide whip). This had important implications for the settlement patterns of the north, as people moved away from the ridge where they were living in the centre of the island to closer to the coast, where coconut palms grew better.

At the time of my first research trip to Mafia in the 1960s, settlement sites were marked by the density of coconut trees. The coconuts were at that time split, husked and dried and the resultant copra exported via the government-backed cooperatives. When the cooperative societies dwindled, people sent their coconuts to Dar es Salaam on the small local dhows. At a later stage, when Tanzania went through a period of economic difficulty in the 1970s and 1980s, and lack of foreign exchange meant that cooking oil was unavailable, whole coconuts fetched good prices in the markets of Dar es Salaam. Subsequently, however, the price of coconuts dropped: cooking oil once again could be bought in shops, coconuts were no longer needed in international markets for making such items as soap, and globally there was over-production.

Things were little better with cashew nuts that had also been widely planted on Mafia Island and elsewhere on the East Coast. Tanzania never developed an industry to process the nuts, so they were exported raw to countries like India, where they were processed, packaged and exported.

Kanga, like many (but not all) villages on Mafia and elsewhere on the coast, lies close to the sea and this enables its inhabitants not only to travel by small dhows (*mashua*) but also to fish, an occupation that has become increasingly economically important. Improved fishing gear and an increased demand from Dar es Salaam has made fishing more attractive as an occupation these days than was the case when I first visited northern Mafia. At that time, a few fishermen used basic gear primarily to catch fish that they sold locally; some dried their catch and took it to sell in Dar. Today, however, some villages in and around Mafia are almost completely dependent upon fishing, for example Kanga's smaller neighbour Bweni, where the use of improved gear such as outboard engines and refrigerated boxes has enabled the export of fresh fish to the city. Thus, over the last half century, the cash side of the economy of northern Mafia has shifted from one dependent largely on the sale of coconuts to one where fishing for finfish, lobsters and prawns has become more important. This has also meant that younger men are able to earn an income at an earlier stage in their lives than was possible when the planting and buying of coconut trees took some years to yield a good crop, and most trees were owned by older men and some women.

Over the last half century, the economy of the coast has been increasingly monetised and more villagers have sought wage labour. As early as 1960, Tanner described how sisal estates around Tanga and Pangani in Tanzania used to offer work to local people. When I first started working in northern Mafia, many young men would go annually to Zanzibar for the clove-picking season but, by the 1970s, they were more likely to go to Dar es Salaam, and some remained there for long periods if they could get work. In the 1970s and 1980s this might be in the few factories that had been established, but later they entered the informal economy, primarily trading coconuts and fish at the Kariokoo Market.

p.585

An even more recent change has been the entry of tourism throughout the island of Mafia, and in other parts of the East Coast, especially on Zanzibar and the Kenya coast. There has been an explosion of hotel and lodge building. Mafia Island, for example, now boasts some two dozen hotels or lodges and several diving centres based in the island's Marine Park. Walley's (2004) study of the small island of Chole off the south-east coast of Mafia reveals that many young people seek work in the nearby tourist hotels and in the Mafia Island Marine Park. This is likely to be an increasing trend, as land has already been bought up along most of the beaches of Mafia's east coast for further hotels and lodges. In Kanga and Bweni virtually all of the beach land has been sold to developers who will no doubt use it one day. People bemoan such developments: 'tourists do not behave according to our cultural norms', 'they will corrupt our young people', 'we will end up with no access to our beaches where we launch our boats and mend our nets' (see Caplan 2011). Many of them have seen the developments in Zanzibar and are not impressed by the argument that tourism brings jobs: 'not for people like us. If we get any work, it will be at the lowest level'. They also note that most of the tourist developers are foreigners and there has been little opportunity for them to set up a different kind of tourism: local, low-key, one which they control and from which local people would benefit more than is currently the case.

In short then, 'development' (*maendeleo*) brings benefits to some (young men who fish, for example) but many others lose out, with examples being loss of land or a drop in the price of cash crops such as coconuts.

Two village families

I conclude with two very different examples of village families drawn from my fieldwork in northern Mafia.

'Mohamed' (pseudonym) was born and spent most of his life in Kanga village in northern Mafia. He received only a rudimentary Koranic education, but it did enable him to read and write Swahili in Arabic script, even though he never went to primary school.

Like many coastal people, he travelled a good deal in his youth, working as a sailor on dhows and as a picker of cloves on the plantations in Zanzibar. He married Mwahadia, a Kanga woman who had previously been married to a man of Mafian origin living in Zanzibar. The latter treated her badly and she eventually got a divorce and married Mohamed, by whom she had ten children. They lived together in Kanga village and cultivated subsistence crops as well as growing coconuts. In addition, Mohamed engaged in a little trade to Dar es Salaam, while Mwahadia, like most northern Mafian women, obtained extra cash through making raffia mats and, unusually, pottery. In the 1970s they quarrelled violently and eventually divorced (Caplan 1992, 1997). While Mwahadia later remarried, Mohamed never did so.

Of their ten children, none completed primary schooling, but one did get a job in a hotel, eventually rising through the ranks and becoming relatively well paid. He built a house in the village for his parents, but just as it was completed they divorced and never lived in it together. Sadly, he contracted AIDS and died in his forties. Both his parents were devastated at the loss of their eldest son, who had been the financial mainstay of the family. Another son became a sailor and was drowned at sea, while one of the daughters also died young. The remaining daughters remained in northern Mafia, contracting a series of largely unsuccessful marriages and producing several grandchildren for Mohamed and Mwahadia. After his own divorce, Mohamed was cared for by one of his divorced daughters, with whom he lived. As I describe in a personal narrative of Mohamed (Caplan 1997), he became increasingly involved in spirit possession cults in the later part of his life. His wife Mwahadia, who had spent time in Zanzibar with her first husband, continued to live in Kanga, but regularly visited Zanzibar to see one of her daughters who had married there, and also Dar es Salaam, where the hotel worker son lived.

p.586

The trajectory of the life of Mikidadi was rather different (Caplan 2014, 2016). He was the son of a Koran school teacher in Kanga where he attended primary school. He was sent at the age of 12 to live with his older sister and her husband, who had migrated to Zanzibar. There he received a better standard of schooling than was available at that time on Mafia, and later moved with them to Dar es Salaam where he was eventually admitted to a government boarding school. He finished his secondary schooling and hoped to go to university but was not chosen. Instead he was sent to a vocational forestry school in Arusha and became a government forestry officer, working mainly as a tree officer in Dar.

In his late twenties, Mikidadi married Hadia, a woman of Bweni descent who had been brought up in Zanzibar, and they had two daughters. They lived mainly in Dar es Salaam, but regularly visited Kanga village. When his father became ill, Mikidadi, who had by this time moved to a job in the new private sector, resigned his post to care for his father and look after the family's affairs on Mafia. He never held another post in the formal sector but made a living from the family land and trees on Mafia, and by helping people in the city

who had small businesses and would give him temporary work. On the death of his father, Mikidadi also took over responsibility for the Koran school in the village and sought to raise funds so that it could be enlarged. Hadia meanwhile engaged in petty trade and later got a job in a flower nursery.

In addition to their own two daughters, Mikidadi and Hadia had a succession of the children of relatives living with them in Dar. In some cases, one or both parents had died and they took over responsibility for the children's upkeep and education. In other instances, village parents sent their children to live there so that they could get the better education that the city offered. One of the daughters went to live in Zanzibar with her mother's sister, who offered to help with her education in return for some baby-sitting.

Mikidadi helped to found an NGO Chamama (*Changia cha Maendeleo Mafia* – Cooperative for the Development of Mafia), whose purpose was to improve development on Mafia, long considered one of the most backward parts of Tanzania. He died in his forties in 2002, perhaps overwhelmed by his numerous responsibilities, and his wife, who had been devastated by his unexpected death, also succumbed a few years later. In her last years, unable to make a living, she sent her remaining daughter to live with another relative in Zanzibar. She herself remained living in Dar es Salaam, where she had finally obtained ownership deeds to the house built by Mikidadi, but regularly visited both Zanzibar and Mafia.

While all of these people identified with and considered themselves as belonging to the villages of their birth, their life stories reveal the extent of movement that is common to coastal people. Mohamed knew not only Mafia, but the southern Tanzania coast which he had visited as a sailor, and Zanzibar where he picked cloves as a youth. Later he visited Dar es Salaam on many occasions, both for trade and to visit his son working in a hotel. Mikidadi lived in Kanga village on Mafia, in Zanzibar Town, and in the city of Dar es Salaam. He spent most of his adult life moving between Mafia and Dar es Salaam, but also often visiting his daughter in Zanzibar. Mwahadia and Hadia also travelled between Mafia, Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam, but primarily either to accompany their husbands, to visit adult children who had settled elsewhere on the coast, or to attend family weddings and funeral rituals.

p.587

All of these places were linked by networks of kinship and marriage, trade and common religious practices – Islam, Sufi'ism and, in some cases, spirit possession – which contributed to a sense of remaining within the familiar Swahili world even when quite far away from home. But place of origin, which usually meant a village in a rural area, or a villagised section of a town such as Dar es Salaam or the Ng'ambo section of Zanzibar city, remained significant. In short, then, the distinction between village and town is of much less significance to coastal residents than it is to researchers².

Notes

- 1 I lived for a year in Kanga village between 1965 and 1966, also paying regular visits to neighbouring Bweni and spending a further month in Banja village. In 1967 I lived in Baleni village in central Mafia for several months. Later shorter visits to northern Mafia were roughly once a decade: 1976, 1985, 1994, 2002, 2004 and 2010.
- 2 I am indebted to the editors for this insight.

References

- Beckerleg, S. 1994. 'Watamu: lost land but a new Swahili town'. In *Continuity and Autonomy in Swahili Communities*, edited by D. Parkin. Wien: Beitrage zur Afrikanistik, London: SOAS.
- Bujra, J. M. 1968. 'An anthropological study of political action in a Bajuni village in Kenya'. PhD diss., University of London.
- Caplan, P. 1969. 'Cognatic descent groups on Mafia Island, Tanzania'. *Man* 4 (3): 419–31.
- Caplan, A. P. 1975. *Choice and Constraint in a Swahili Community*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Caplan, P. 1978. 'The Swahili of Chole Island, Tanzania'. In *Face Values: Some Anthropological Themes*, edited by A. Sutherland. London: BBC.
- Caplan, P. 1992. 'Sex and spirits: a Swahili informant and his diary'. In *Anthropology and Autobiography*, edited by J. Okely and H. Callaway, 64–81. London: Routledge.
- Caplan, P. 1997. *African Voices, African Lives*. London: Routledge.
- Caplan, P. 2011. 'A "clash of civilizations" on Mafia Island? The story of a dance festival'. *Anthropology Today* 27 (2): 18–21.
- Caplan, P. 2013. 'Changing Swahili cultures and identities in a globalising world: an approach from anthropology'. *Swahili Forum* 20: 31–47, <http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~afrika/swafo/>.
- Caplan, P. 2014. *Mikidadi wa Mafia: Maisha ya Mwanaharakati na Familia Yake Nchini Tanzania*. Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota.
- Caplan, P. 2015. 'Two weddings in northern Mafia: changes in women's lives since the 1960s'. In *Gendered Lives in the Western Indian Ocean: Islam, Marriage, and Sexuality on the Swahili Coast*, edited by E. Stiles and K. Daly Thompson, 85–116. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Caplan, P. 2016. *Mikidadi: Individual Biography and National History in Tanzania*. Canon Pyon: Sean Kingston Publishing.
- Chami, F. A. 1999. 'The Early Iron Age on Mafia Island and its relationship to the mainland'. *Azania* 34: 1–10.
- Chami, F. A. 2002. 'People and contacts in the ancient western Indian Ocean seaboard of

Azania'. *Man and Environment* 27 (1): 33–44.

Chittick, H. N. 1961. 'Kisimani Mafia: excavations at an Islamic settlement on the East African coast'. Occasional Paper no. 12. Tanganyika Ministry of Education, Antiquities Division.

Chittick, H. N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast; The Finds*, Vol. 2. Nairobi: British Institute in East Africa.

Christie, A. C. 2011. 'Exploring the social context of maritime exploration in the Mafia Archipelago Tanzania: an archaeological perspective'. PhD diss., University of York.

Ghaidan, U. 1975. *Lamu: A Study of the Swahili Town*. Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau.

Giles, L. 1987. 'Possession cults on the Swahili coast: a re-examination of theories of marginality'. *Africa* 57 (2): 234–58.

p.588

Horton, M. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Kresse, K. 2007. *Philosophising in Mombasa*. London: Edinburgh University Press.

Landberg, P. 1977. 'Kinship and community in a Tanzanian coastal village'. PhD diss., University of California-Davis.

Larsen, K. 2003. 'Change, continuity and contestation: the politics of modern identities in Zanzibar'. In *Swahili Modernities*, edited by P. Caplan and F. Topan, 121–44. Lawrenceville: Africa World Press.

Larsen, K. 2008. *Where Humans and Spirits Meet: The Politics of Rituals and Identified Spirits in Zanzibar*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Lienhardt, P. 1959. 'The Mosque College of Lamu and its social background'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 53: 228–42.

Middleton, J. 1961. *Land Tenure in Zanzibar*. London: HMSO.

Middleton, J. 1992. *The World of the Swahili: An African Mercantile Civilization*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Middleton, J. and Campbell, J. 1965. *Zanzibar: Its Society and Its Politics*. London: Oxford University Press.

Mirza, S. and Strobel, M. 1989. *Three Swahili Women: Life Histories from Mombasa, Kenya*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Nimtz, A. H. 1980. *Islam and Politics in East Africa: The Sufi Order in Tanzania*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Nisula, T. 1999. *Everyday Spirits and Medical Interventions: Ethnographic and Historical Notes on the Therapeutic Conventions in Zanzibar Town*. Helsinki: Transactions of the Finnish Anthropological Society.

- Parkin, D. 1995a. 'Latticed knowledge: eradication and dispersal of the unpalatable in Islam, medicine and anthropological theory'. In *Counterworking: Managing Knowledge in Its Diversity*, edited by R. Fardon, 143–63. London: Routledge.
- Parkin, D. 1995b. 'Blank banners and Islamic consciousness in Zanzibar'. In *Questions of Consciousness*, edited by A. Cohen and N. Rapport, 198–216. London: Routledge.
- Parkin, D. and Constantin, F. (Eds) 1989. 'Social stratification in Swahili society'. Special issue of *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 59 (2).
- Racine, O. 1995. 'La mise en tourisme du mwaka kogwa'. In *Autorite et Pouvoir chez les Swahili*, edited by P. Caplan and F. Leguennec-Coppens. Paris: Karthala.
- Racine-Issa, O. 1994. 'The *mwaka* of Makunduchi, Zanzibar'. In *Continuity and Autonomy in Swahili Societies*, edited by D. Parkin, 167–76. Vienna: Beitrage zur Afrikanistik.
- Strobel, M. 1979. *Muslim Women in Mombasa, 1890–1975*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Swartz, M. 1991. *The Way the World Is*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Tanner, R. E. S. 1960. 'Land rights on the Tanganyika coast'. *African Studies* 19: 14–24.
- Walley, C. 2004. *Rough Waters: Nature and Development in an East African Marine Park*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Wijeyewardene, G. 1959a. *Mambrui: Status and Social Relations in a Multiracial Community*. Kampala: East African Institute for Social Research.
- Wijeyewardene, G. 1959b. 'A preliminary report on tribal differentiation and social groupings on the south Kenya coast'. Paper presented at the East African Institute of Social Research, Kampala.
- Widjeyewardene, G. 1961. 'Some aspects of village solidarity among Kiswahili-speaking communities of Kenya and Tanganyika'. PhD diss., University of Cambridge.
- Zein, A. H. el, 1974. *The Sacred Meadows*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

51

THE MODERN LIFE OF SWAHILI STONETOWNS

William Cunningham Bissell

Contemporary eastern African stonetowns (the term we are using in this volume, as distinct from Zanzibar's Stone Town) are often depicted as portals to the past – urban sites that quintessentially express Swahili culture while also embodying continuous links to an age-old civilisation. In the Zanzibari case, as an official guide so aptly put it, 'the Stone Town of Zanzibar is a living history' (Zanzibar Tourist Task Force 1993: 2). Or, as a volume of archival photographs phrased it, 'Zanzibar is indeed a living museum' (Sheriff 1995: 13). Similar terms were used subsequently to support Tanzania's application to UNESCO for the city's inclusion on the World Heritage List, approved in 2000. As the official UNESCO designation asserted, the Stone Town 'evolved through several millennia of maritime mercantile interaction', and the surviving city was a 'physical reflection' of the 'long-term exchange of human values' in coastal eastern Africa. While underlining the need for comparative study of related Swahili sites such as Lamu, Mombasa, Mogadishu and Kilwa, the UN text went on to praise Zanzibar's Stone Town as the 'best preserved example of its kind', an urban formation that offers an 'authentic impression of the living Swahili culture' (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/173/documents>). Notions of continuity and authentic tradition are nothing new when it comes to Swahili stonetowns; indeed, it is no accident that timeless and essentialised visions of coastal sites and structures were produced under Western colonialism, which rested on the denial of historical agency to indigenous others. The static understandings generated during the colonial period were in sharp contrast to the actual fluidity, dynamism and cosmopolitan adaptability that had characterised the coast for millennia. And in the postcolonial period these tensions between fluidity and fixity have taken on new forms, as explored below. Even as stonetowns are being transformed by novel historical forces, timeless visions of culture and tradition have been resurrected as rationales to preserve these sites as special zones of heritage and history for mass tourist consumption.

At one level it might seem that the world heritage designation of Stone Town represents the culmination of decades of work by preservationists, NGOs, local officials,

residents and transnational groups to build a case for the global significance and value of the ‘indigenous creativity’ (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/173/documents>) that infused Swahili urbanism. But by stressing historical continuities, advocates for Stone Town never managed to acknowledge the historical novelty of what they were seeking to accomplish. Nor did they seem to be aware of their debt to a long tradition of scholarly discourse on Swahili cities. In succinct fashion, the world heritage listing of Stone Town and Lamu at the turn of the millennium echoed many of the key themes and tropes in the wider literature regarding stonetowns along the Swahili coast. And there were broader connections as well to Western traditions of classifying and collecting African visual culture. When discussing or putting Africa on display, after all, material objects have long had the capacity to stand in for and represent entire peoples: stamping identities, etching lines of ethnic demarcation and crafting hierarchies of cultural authenticity and value (Meier 2009: 14, this volume). While this insight can be applied to trade goods, decorative objects or ritual figures such as the Kongo *nkisi*, among many others, it can equally well be scaled up to include larger forms and structures: houses, architectural complexes, streetscapes or even settlements. Within Swahili studies, the figure of the stonetown (and the stone house) has long played this constitutive role, establishing many of the core features that define coastal culture and distinctively mark the Swahili *as Swahili*. Much of this discussion, however, has focused on establishing ideal types or traits – defining clear parameters that in many ways go against the fluid and dynamic processes that constituted Swahili cities in the first place.

p.590

Written in stone: ideal types and towns

Over time, Swahili settlements have extended all along roughly 2,500 km of the eastern African coast from Mogadishu south into Mozambique, including many offshore island sites. Swahili have long embraced a cosmopolitan worldliness (Allen 1979; LaViolette 2008), both on the continent itself and across the Indian Ocean world. Older European colonial perspectives emphasised the external origins of Swahili civilisation, stressing Arab, Persian or Asian influences as decisive. Debates about either the ‘African’ or ‘Arab’, indigenous or alien origins of the Swahili coast have occupied earlier scholars, and even fed into more popular and political discourses in Kenya and Tanzania. But more recent scholarship has complicated these simplistic binaries, while the archaeological record has cast doubt on many of its core assumptions, especially the notion of Middle-Eastern cultural innovations entering into and overwhelming indigenous African ‘tradition’. In fact, ‘the archaeological evidence shows no discontinuity but rather a steady development over time’ (Horton and Middleton 2000: 16). Coral buildings have been dated as early as the ninth century (Donley 1982); most stonetowns were founded by the twelfth century

(Kusimba 1999), with a particularly flourishing period in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Given the status of stonetowns as hallmarks of Swahili culture and identity, their characteristic features might seem easy to define. After all, the contrast between stone structures and earth and timber dwellings could not seem clearer, and the limits of stone settlements – where they begin and end – are surely obvious. Yet these matters are less settled than they might seem. Most accounts of the coast focus on the urban character of Swahili society, while highlighting its mercantile and maritime nature. Without overarching political unity or military coordination until the nineteenth century, the Swahili coast consisted of a series of competitive settlements, *miji*, whose shifting fortunes were linked to changing trade flows, politics, environmental factors and regional interactions. Most *miji* consisted of wards or *mitaa* that grew up out of original clusters of kin or corporate groups, and possessed significant tombs as well as at least one central *ijumaa* (Friday) mosque. Horton and Middleton (2000: 137) have described Swahili urbanism as involving a series of conurbations engaged in complex interrelationships with rural hinterlands, other urban settlements and trading partners from across the Indian Ocean. These relations shifted considerably over time, and the fortunes of particular congeries of urban settlements rose and fell with trade flows, political alignments, the impact of external forces and cultural shifts.

In this context, stone houses constructed in coral and lime architecture have been consistently linked to patricians and mercantile elites, glossed as ‘the quintessential Swahili’ (Wynne-Jones 2013: 759). The Lamu Archipelago in northern Kenya has played a key role in the construction of the idea of the ‘Swahili house’, largely through the work of James de Vere Allen, Usam Ghaidan and Linda Donley-Reid in the 1970s and early 1980s. And once a basic model was fleshed out with regard to structure and symbolic power, this representation was often used to discuss the role and function of the *mji* going back in time. According to the classical model, the Swahili house was a large, often multi-storied, edifice that presented an imposing face to the external world; structured around a central courtyard, the outside walls were typically unbroken by windows. These dwellings were organised around what Ghaidan (1976) defined as an ‘intimacy gradient’ controlling access to interior spaces that reflected (and enacted) gendered distinctions between female and male, inner and outer, private and public. Guests were received in an outer reception area (*daka*), or in liminal spaces (*sebule*, *majlis*) near the door or outer perimeter; the inner spaces and higher floors of the houses were reserved for increasingly intimate, private and familial interactions. Spatial organisation, then, was said to reflect (and produce) the dynamics of social relations, marking the distance and difference between insiders and outsiders, kin and strangers, women and men, purity and risk.

Stonetowns have also been linked insistently to power and patrician status. No question,

building in stone always entailed gestures of permanence by merchant elites, seeking to assert their cultural aspirations, prove their long-standing roots, and project social prestige; these structures also served as sites to attract and secure further sources of wealth. Associated with *waungwana*, those with free-born status of long standing in the settlement, the stone house was

not just the badge or symbol of its owner's status, it was also simultaneously its manifestation and its guarantee. It embodied, in its permanence and within its thick, solid wall, his cultural acquisitions and those of his ancestors before him; and he would expect to pass it on to the next generation in a way that the mud and thatch house owner never could.

(Allen 1979: 5.)

As this suggests, the Swahili house was bound up with the persistence of the corporate group over time – serving as an assertion of status, solidity and social worth through the generations. As the kin group grew through marriage, so too the house could expand up or out, adding floors or connecting to newly built adjacent structures via passageways. In organic and negotiated fashion, these processes of extension would lead to the growth and densification of a stonetown over time.

Within stonetowns, Swahili houses were never just representations or symbols of power. First, stone structures were not merely the materialisation of productive activities conducted elsewhere, but rather *both* symbols of wealth *and* spaces for wealth generation – by attracting trade flows, indicating credit worthiness, serving as sites of reception and negotiation, and functioning as storehouses of precious goods. Second, rather than preserves where privacy, precious objects, or women could be protected from the world, stone houses were sites of mediation where public and private domains came together, combining domestic life with economic functions and social activities crucial to the *mji* (Wynne-Jones 2013). Third, as Fleisher and LaViolette (2007) have argued, drawing on Donley-Reid's invocation of Swahili domestic spaces as 'structuring structures' (1990), stone houses were not just static 'things', but active and productive assets. Swahili houses, they argue, should be understood as technologies of self-construction in a changing and competitive social world. Imposing town walls and formidable stone structures may have stood as ideological claims of elite Swahili power intended to impress outsiders, slaves and other subalterns, but the question still remains: why was so much architectural elaboration reserved for the innermost quarters (*ndani*) of dwellings where no outsiders would ever reach, and where ritual and precious goods were displayed? Different arguments and audiences were involved here, as public architecture sought to bolster elite power in the face of others, while,

... the emergence of elaborated private spaces aided in the construction of elite subjectivity and was part of a process in which elites attempted to convince themselves of the rightness of their status and the soundness of their house, especially as it was under siege in rapidly changing political and economic conditions.

From structure to process: fixity and flux in Swahili stonetowns

Symbolic or structural approaches to stonetowns easily translated into static or ahistorical models, seemingly applicable across time and space. ‘Swahili architecture has changed hardly at all over the centuries’, Middleton (1992: 60) writes:

The buildings of stone-towns of today such as Lamu or Pate are similar to those of the ruins of Shanga, Kilwa, Gedi and other early settlements. The building tradition can be traced back to at least the twelfth century, up to the great eighteenth- and nineteenth century houses of present-day Lamu and a few other places.

This invocation of a timeless stone architecture seems especially ironic (Meier, this volume), given the dynamic nature of Swahili society, based on active engagement with outsiders, creative appropriation and incorporation, and the arts of what Bayart (1993: 20–1) has termed ‘extraversion’. In recent years, a growing array of archaeological work has re-introduced both complexity and change into the analysis of Swahili stonetowns, challenging the synchronic approaches produced by an earlier generation of scholars operating in a kind of ‘ethnographic present’. As Stephanie Wynne-Jones (2013: 762) has noted in a different context,

The universalising nature of the structuration approach also means that the rhythms of the contemporary Lamu stonehouse come to stand for an idealising version of Swahili life that turns an extremely dynamic model into a more static idealised understanding of the links between people, places, and objects. This seems especially troublesome in this society, defined by its extraversion and cosmopolitan nature from earliest times.

Earlier interpretive models tended to the synchronic and static, giving far too much weight to the fixed qualities of stone and structure. Swahili *miji*, as Michael Pearson (1998: 105) notes, were Janus-faced port cities, mediating between the interior and the Indian Ocean world; poised at the interface of land and sea, they served to link local, regional and transnational economies as well as cultural spheres. In the fluid space between continental and maritime zones, they sought to take advantage of differing environmental niches, exchanging salt for precious metals, slaves for pearls, ivory for cloth, or dates for mangrove poles (*boriti*), deployed throughout the Gulf as supporting beams in stone architecture (Sheriff 2010). As littoral communities, Swahili societies had to be flexible and adaptive; they depended on capturing mobile flows of people, goods and wealth, and these were highly changeable and shifting over time. Indeed, Middleton’s own point about the extent and reach of Swahili architecture highlights the shift and flux of Swahili cities, undermining his own argument. Present-day Lamu might resemble ruins in Shanga or Kilwa in some obvious ways, but that should not obscure the fact that twenty-first-century Lamu is in no way the same as it was in the eighteenth century, and Shanga and Kilwa,

once thriving cultural and trading centres, are now in ruins – and have been so for quite a long time.

p.593

In other words, few urban settlements lasted across the centuries, and none of them remained unchanged; the map of the Swahili coast shows significant variation over time, as settlements rose to prominence, prospered in particular historical conjunctures and subsequently declined or were abandoned. Kilwa, which flourished by controlling the Indian Ocean gold trade out of Sofala in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, is now a remote and rural archaeological site; on Pemba, most significant stonetowns were abandoned in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the intrusion of the Portuguese only unsettled things further (Fleisher and LaViolette 2007); the Swahili stonetown (much of which was not actually built in stone) in Zanzibar that grew up in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has been totally built over and eradicated since, and other early colonial sites – Mombasa, Tanga, Malindi – have been largely overwhelmed and transformed by subsequent development. While there are continuities over time, everywhere we look change has been a constant, and we cannot ignore the inherent dynamism of these urban worlds.

Moreover, the classic focus on stone architecture tends to elevate patricians over others in the urban environment, erasing subalterns, slaves, clients and artisans from the picture. Houses were all too often treated as accomplished social facts, in effect endorsing the social aspirations of patricians rather than seeing these as unfinished or uncertain. The rhetoric of stonetowns also served to mask the subtle gradations of materials used therein, as well as the co-presence and interdependence of different building types. Swahili structures could be expanded and solidified over time, with ‘mud’ walls being strengthened with increasing amounts of coral rag over time, becoming ‘stone’ through application of lime-cured plaster; rather than distinct types, Swahili structures ranged across an interrelated continuum of local available materials, from less to more permanent (for subtle gradations and variations involved in building materials and techniques used to build Swahili houses, and their diverse implications for status, power and cultural belonging, see Myers 1993: 121–34). In any urban settlement, stone dwellings (of different sizes, heights and conditions) were interspersed with impermanent earth and thatch dwellings, workshops, sheds and huts – not to mention many ‘stone’ houses in unfinished or incomplete states of construction and collapsed structures. Moreover, the patrician class was always far outnumbered by plebeians, recent arrivals, slaves, migrants and rural folk, whose humble structures never endured or received significant notice. As Patrick Wright notes, ‘What survives [in the built environment] is usually what was made and intended to survive: the edifices and the cultural symbols of the powerful, structures of stone rather than wood, the official rather than the makeshift and the vernacular’ (quoted in Jukes 1990: 10). And, of course, the extensive labour of others – slaves, subordinates, clients and artisans – was necessary for the construction of stonetowns, which arose through long-

term processes of wealth and labour extraction enabled by patriarchal social hierarchies. Without them, the *mji* could not exist, just as patrician pretensions to embody ‘cultivated’ and ‘civilised’ behaviour ultimately depended on having others as contrastive foils – *washenzi* (savages), the unwashed, those fresh off the boat and unfamiliar with coastal norms, Kiswahili and the Muslim *umma*.

Contending interests, colonial intrusions

The incursions of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean world unleashed new forces along the Swahili coast, as these interlopers attacked and occupied coastal cities, built forts, imposed port taxes and sought to seize control of the wider Indian Ocean trade through violent means. The Portuguese were met by both local and regional resistance, facing an Ottoman-led expedition to liberate the coast that was embraced by Islamic settlements from Mogadishu to Pate and Mombasa in the late 1580s (Alpers 2014: 78–9). The Portuguese were not alone, of course, as the Dutch, British and French were also expanding into the Indian Ocean basin, but they faced a more potent rival to supremacy in the expanding Yaarubi dynasty of Oman. The Yaarubi consolidated their power in the interior, and then moved to eject the Portuguese from their footholds in Sofar and Muscat around the mid-seventeenth century. Using seized ships from these victories, the Yaarubi initially concentrated their naval power on attacking Portuguese outposts in India and Diu, but thereafter turned their energies to the eastern African coast. Joined by Swahili allies anxious to eject the Portuguese, the Omanis attacked European outposts along the coast, culminating in a two-year siege of Mombasa in 1696–1698 that effectively terminated their presence. Some local dynasties and settlements contended with the Portuguese, while others colluded; all Swahili cities had to negotiate their relations to new external powers even as they competed for position with competitors along the coast.

p.594

The coast, as before, was a series of linked communities without centralised political or military power, and the Omanis initially exercised a loose control over stonetowns that pledged fealty: posting governors, imposing customs and applying naval power against those who tried to remain independent, such as Malindi and Mombasa. These sites were nodes in an emergent monsoon network that was being slowly consolidated, as once prominent settlements at the edges of the Swahili world (Lamu, Kilwa) slowly gave way as centres of power to Mombasa and eventually Zanzibar. It should be noted that the early eighteenth century marked a renaissance in both art and architecture along the Swahili coast. Many of the canonical houses of Lamu and Mombasa reified by later scholars as ‘traditional’ date to this period, with an ironic twist: rather than static or unchanging, Swahili houses during this flowering were marked by a characteristic shift, moving away from previous emphasis on outward decoration and display to stress the articulation of

inner spaces, domestic privacy and interiority.

With the rise of the Busaidi dynasty in the mid-eighteenth century, the Omanis became a growing naval power in the Indian Ocean, allied increasingly with the British and entertaining imperial ambitions over eastern Africa. The French had moved into the Indian Ocean in Mauritius and the Bourbon isles, establishing sugar plantations with imported slave labour. Supplying slaves to the French sector was one source of profit for Omanis, and spices became another: with plantings obtained from the French, Omani Arabs in Zanzibar established their own plantations worked by growing numbers of slaves, leading to a veritable clove boom in the nineteenth century (Marshall and Kiriamia, this volume). Around the same time, the Sultan of Oman, Seyyid Sultan bin Said, shifted his capital to Zanzibar, transforming the town into an emergent centre for Omani elites, European and American trading firms, and Indian merchant capital as well as artisans and shopkeepers. What had been a fairly modest Swahili settlement, where a few stone structures along the seafront were vastly outnumbered by humble Swahili houses and earth and timber dwellings, grew into the expansive capital of the Omani empire with far-flung global links (Smee 1844; Sheriff 1987). As Said and his Busaidi allies consolidated their hold on the entire coast, they transformed Zanzibar into an entrepôt, the base for all foreign firms, merchant capital and the centre of the caravan trade into the interior.

The nineteenth century marked the apogee of Zanzibar's position as the most important port city on the coast. Throughout much of this period, Zanzibar had favourable terms of trade with its mercantile partners, and profits from slaves, spices and ivory were increasingly invested in substantial stone dwellings along the seafront as well as multi-storied Indian-inflected architecture and shopfront dwellings. Initial development concentrated on the triangular peninsula surrounded by the sea and almost cut off from the rest of the island by a tidal creek; this area, now known as Mji Mkongwe, or 'Old Town', was solidified and built up even as the rest of the city was built out, spreading across the creek into what was known as Ng'ambo, 'the other side' (Sheriff, this volume). During this period, Mji Mkongwe remained heterogeneous and consisted of an intricate and labyrinthine layout with mixed building types: stone structures of one or two storeys, simpler Swahili houses, huts, workshops, cattlesheds and warehouses (Sheriff 2002; Bissell 2011). Ng'ambo was also intermixed, though structures tended to be earth and timber, more impermanent and single-storey. Clients of Omani elites were settled there on *wakf* lands, consecrated or endowed land or property, dedicated for Islamic religious purposes: for slaves, artisans, labourers, recent arrivals and the poor (Fair 2001). More recent arrivals from the Hadhramaut mingled with Comorians, Indian traders, Swahili and Africans from the mainland interior – Nyamwezi, Yao, Zaramo and many others.

Omani power in the Indian Ocean had been fostered under the aegis of British support, but what seemed like a partnership became increasingly unequal in the second half of the

nineteenth century. The British intervened in succession disputes to split Zanzibar from Muscat, to place their favoured candidates on the throne, and to enforce increasing restrictions on the external slave trade, imposing a ban in 1873. The profits and position of Omani elites were undermined, even as they faced increasing levels of debt to Indian moneylenders. The power of the sultanate rested on negotiated mutual rights and obligations with rivals both within the islands and far beyond, extending influence over a vast area. Patron-client relations were backed up with the threat of the application of force in case of resistance, but the sultan lacked the capacity to delimit and defend his sovereignty over a wide area. Undermined from within and facing concerted challenges from without, the sultanate ultimately was caught between British and German expansion, as one mode of colonial intervention was subsumed by another more aggressive and assertive form with the eventual declaration of a formal British protectorate in 1890 (Bissell 1999).

The British backed into the assumption of formal control over Zanzibar, driven by speculation, the desire to box out European competitors, and the goal of maintaining hegemony in the Indian Ocean. It was in many senses a hostile takeover: they agreed to maintain the sultan in power and protect him from opponents while stripping him of most of his assets, income and territory to pay for colonial occupation and reorganisation. In the early years there were hopes of rapid economic expansion. Gerald Portal, an early British consul-general, vowed in 1891 that he could remake Zanzibar into the 'East African Hong Kong' – the central market and metropolis of the region, as well as the main transshipment point connecting the Indian Ocean world to the coast and interior. His vision was to create a thriving Swahili *ecumene* – precisely what the British had helped to diminish and deconstruct over the previous decade. The declaration of the protectorate sundered the islands from the mainland interior, established German rivals along the coast, and broke the Swahili coast into separate spheres – decisively undermining the political and economic role Swahili peoples had long played as crucial intermediaries between the continent and the Indian Ocean world.

The static and reifying views of stonetowns eventually produced by twentieth-century scholars are rooted in the colonial period. Across colonial Africa, where European occupation was motivated by the ethnocentric assumptions of the 'civilising mission', indigenous cities were often cast as overcrowded, outmoded or obstacles to overcome. Zanzibar was frequently dismissed as irregular, unplanned, diseased and disordered – despite that it was structured by organic Swahili settlement principles and infused with local social logics. Like other urban settings associated with indigenous (or Islamic) practice, Zanzibar city was cast as backward and behind. What one British official described in the late nineteenth century as the 'quaint, queer, rambling, dirty old Arab town of Zanzibar' (Elton [1879] 1968: 47) was linked ideologically by colonial authorities to the alleged despotism and disorder of the *ancien régime*. The British were particularly offended by what they perceived as a lack of regularity and abstract order, what one early

guide glossed as ‘the maze of weird, winding alleys, anywhere from 6 to 14 feet in length, which do duty as streets’ (Playne and Gale 1908–9: n.p.). Establishing the bare rudiments of municipal bureaucracy took a great deal of time, resources and effort but, once they had been roughly established, colonial officials repeatedly announced their intentions to clear out and clean up the urban sphere. Their efforts were incompetent, inevitably delayed, undercapitalised and beset with complications and contradictions (Bissell 2011), as urban plans took decades to flesh out but continually failed to be implemented.

p.596

While the old town in Zanzibar was never razed and remade by totalising colonial plans, piecemeal interventions were introduced that had cumulative effects. These changes sought to shape a classic, dual colonial city – consolidating and deepening the contrasts between the core triangular peninsula (‘town proper’ in early colonial documents), and Ng’ambo, the ‘other side’. Town planning was initially sparked by the racist assumptions of sanitary segregationists and hierarchical impulses of colonial power. Density, intermixture and hybridity in the built environment were cast as sources of disease, and the modern planning prescription was to reduce confusion and congestion. In Zanzibar this resulted in a policy of razing and relocating so-called ‘native huts’ from areas west of the tidal creek, treating the latter as an allegedly Arab, Indian and European city (cf. Lanchester 1923). Also, building regulations and permissions were deployed to consolidate ‘town proper’ as a ‘stone’ town, identifying these permanent dwellings with specific racial groups. Just as the British asserted that the sultanate was Arab in character and worked assiduously to bolster Omani elites, so too the multi-storeyed stone dwelling was depicted as the proper architectural expression of their culture. Diverse Africans and Swahili were frequently confused or lumped together, linked in essentialist ways to so-called ‘huts’ or modest earth and thatch-roofed dwellings. During the first half of the twentieth century, Ng’ambo spread out with the growth of low-rise *mitaa*, wards, that were heterogeneous and diverse – home to recent migrants, former slaves and their descendants, workers, artisans and the popular classes (African, Indian, Swahili, Arab or Comorian, and any combination thereof). During this period as well, the triangular peninsula became associated with wealthier Arabs and Indians, colonial governance, primary markets and businesses, and urban leisure and spectacle – in short, becoming consolidated as a colonial-era ‘Stone Town’, later designated as ‘historic’ and a site of heritage.

From Somalia to Mozambique, the imposition of competing European colonial powers divided the Swahili coast and displaced it from its former position of mercantile and maritime prominence. Swahili urban settlements were cut off from their intermediary roles in global circuits of trade, reduced to bit players in more regional economies oriented toward the interior. They were encompassed within new colonially ordered states, with growing centres of power and commerce situated in Dar es Salaam or Nairobi (or old ports, as in Mombasa, giving way to relocated, new deep-water ports). The place of the Swahili in the new nations of eastern Africa was de-centred, as the coast was segmented

and no longer hegemonic. In this context, stonetowns no longer served as emergent and dynamic nodes of wealth, prestige and power in a wider network linking Africa and the Indian Ocean. Their economies were curtailed or foreclosed, with modest growth or even genteel decline. The Indian Ocean world that had existed for millennia was concurrently being transformed by new technologies and modes of transport, as the steam ship increasingly displaced dhows (*majahazi*) as monsoon-driven, indigenous means of communication, cultural exchange and trade (Gilbert, this volume). The long-term maritime and mercantile processes that had shaped Swahili societies and settlements were decisively altered in ways that proved detrimental to the continued growth and expansion of stonetowns.

p.597

Modern relics

Across Africa, colonial powers treated certain kinds of established urban sites as zones of tradition – old towns that could be walled off, contained and treated as relics of the past. It was altogether too expensive and disruptive to raze these sites; better yet to leave them as *medinas* or *casbahs*, spaces of indigenous authenticity that could serve as native reserves or locations – convenient foils, especially in French North Africa, against which to construct gleaming new modern *villes nouvelles*. New urban formations would show the way forward, demonstrating European technological and scientific prowess, while colonial rulers could manifest their paternalist impulses by classifying and protecting artefacts of the *ancien régime*. The conservation of culture and preservation of space always went hand in hand with paternalist assumptions of European stewardship, discernment and civilisational authority. As colonialism progressed into the interwar period, and its socially disruptive influences on African societies sparked alarm in official circles (not to mention increasing African resistance), preservation and stability fell into greater favour as means of bolstering the status quo and dampening anti-colonial agitation.

What to make of stonetowns was inevitably an issue. Colonial occupation was never cheap; British officials on the ground faced a constant challenge to generate more revenue or attract investment that could be devoted to economically generative activities. If stonetowns were not in themselves sites of wealth generation, the question remained how to turn them to more productive uses. While some Europeans complained about the dirt or disorder of stonetowns, others cast them as picturesque and romantic. As one English traveller opined,

It is only in Zanzibar itself and in ancient Mozambique that European civilization has done little to destroy the impression of the past, and the man who treads the narrow lanes of the former city may still believe himself walking in some fantastic town of the Arabian Nights.

(Lewin 1908: 530.)

These discursive framings were taken up in subsequent travel accounts, memoirs and tourist guides, until they were established as all too familiar orientalist tropes (for contemporary examples in Stone Town, see Bissell 2005).

These images structured how visitors would conceptualise and see the city, shaped architectural plans through the building approval process (eventually even petrol stations had to be built in Saracenic or Orientalist style), and sparked early proposals to create certain kinds of tourist attractions. The colonial government was compelled to find new ways to generate revenue and, by the mid-1930s, had turned to the idea of promoting tourism in the city. 'I have found a marked desire on the part of most strangers to know more of the customs and methods of life of the Arab gentry than can usually be displayed to them', wrote N. J. Robinson to the Municipal Officer in early 1935. He argued that the government should acquire a stone house associated with the royal family along the seafront and turn it into a living museum. He was of the opinion,

... that a decided attraction would be an exhibition house fully furnished, and as nearly possible in the condition in which it would be used by a reasonably wealthy Arab. In order to make it impressive, furniture and other decorative articles might be rather more in evidence than is the case in practice, and later it might be possible to provide lay figures for the better display of national costumes.

p.598

Continuing his Orientalist theme, Robinson also wanted to refurbish and open up the Hamamni baths for tourist use. In the event, neither museum project came soon to fruition, waiting until the 1990s to be revived as elements of Zanzibar's post-socialist heritage landscape. The infrastructure and technology of mass tourism was many decades in the future. Transport was relatively slow and expensive, with high barriers to engage in these leisure practices, a lack of facilities and marketing, and insufficient interest or demand. Other than occasional cruises or small numbers of visitors from Kenya, Rhodesia or South Africa, the museumification of stonetowns remained a vague prospect or project for the future. Nonetheless the idea of recasting stonetowns as spectacles or settings that could attract outsiders had staying power, surfacing in the 1970s with renewed vigour, as urban deterioration and the need for economic renewal became more pressing concerns for postcolonial states.

Postcolonial developments: decline and preservation

The continued slow decline and marginalisation of stonetowns in the postcolonial period created precisely the conditions for later preservation campaigns to take off, as such spaces changed in significance, acquired patina, became linked to national 'patrimony', and thereby shifted positions in different regimes of value. These urban sites were never crucial or central to the postcolonial economic development of the new eastern African

independent nation-states, and hence never subject to the destructive effects of urban 'renewal' or redevelopment common elsewhere in the 1950s and '60s. Lamu became a quiet backwater on the northern coast. Old Town Mombasa was overwhelmed by growth elsewhere in the port city. Urban Zanzibar was transformed by a revolution in the mid-1960s, which aimed to overturn the old colonial spatial order – allowing older, stone areas of the city to languish while devoting significant resources and energy to modernise Ng'ambo and make a series of socialist new towns in the countryside. In Mombasa, Brian Hoyle (2001: 184) has detected a pattern of decline, dissociation and neglect, highlighting the cultural and spatial dissociation between 'the traditional urban forms, small-scale socio-economic and political nuclei of the Old Town', and the modern urban growth occurring elsewhere on Mombasa Island and the mainland. Similar patterns predominated elsewhere and, beginning in the 1970s, efforts to document and preserve the built environment of Swahili stonetowns were well underway, first in Lamu (Ghaidan 1976; Siravo and Pulver 1986), then Mombasa (Hoyle 2001; Aldrick 1996), and finally Zanzibar (Siravo 1996). Architectural assessments and building documentation were carried out in each of these cities, followed by conservation plans, legal and bureaucratic designations of protected areas, and eventually UNESCO World Heritage listing (for Lamu and Zanzibar).

This restructuring of space echoed developments elsewhere, from the malling and theming of cities, to the branding of heritage sites and historic zones, and the turn from manufacture and industry as a basis of production to spectacle, leisure and entertainment. As Henri Lefebvre ([1974] 1991: 360) noted presciently in the mid-1970s, just as these trends were taking off,

countries in the throes of rapid development blithely destroy historic spaces – houses, palaces, military or civil structures. If advantage or profit is to be found in it, the old is swept away. Later, however, . . . these same countries are liable to discover how such spaces may be pressed into the service of cultural consumption, of 'culture itself,' and of the tourism and leisure industries with their almost limitless prospects. When this happens, everything that they had so merrily demolished during the *belle époque* is reconstituted at great expense. When destruction had not been complete, 'renovation' becomes the order of the day, or imitation, or replication, or neo-this and neo-that. In any case, what had been annihilated in the earlier frenzy of growth now becomes an object of adoration. And former objects of utility now pass for rare and precious works of art.

p.599

Conservation efforts were hampered by enduring tensions – to wit, how exactly to generate resources to fund preservation without profoundly changing the character of these cities, altering building uses and displacing residents. Significant funding for conservation planning or project assessment was obtained from either UN Habitat, development NGOs or the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, and teams of consultants, experts and study groups descended on the coast to conduct their assessments, issue reports and publish their glossy texts. In most cases, however, while the plans were paid for, their implementation was not; consequently, the preservation of urban spaces has remained partial, limited or incomplete. The turn to conservation policies came at a time when

orthodoxies of neoliberal privatisation held sway in Western development circles, and the proposed cure came with its own problematic symptoms: threatening to overwhelm stonetowns with capitalist redevelopment by slashing state regulation, selling government properties, soliciting external investors and unleashing uncoordinated private market forces. Transnational planners and preservationists all touted the historic, romantic and exotic character of stonetowns, and vowed that the way to save these spaces was to transform them into tourist assets, creating a new urban economy of spectacle, leisure and consumption (Qian *et al.* 1982; LaNier *et al.* 1983). Stonetowns have been carved out as ‘historic’ and designated as unique windows onto age-old Swahili civilisation, precisely at the moment that they are being rapidly redeveloped into something else or isolated as mere preserves that stand apart from the lives of ordinary Swahili along the coast. They serve to stage Swahili culture to wealthier others or outsiders – as in the annual Lamu Cultural Festival, Sauti za Busara (Voices of Wisdom) music festival, or Festival of the Dhow Countries (ZIFF) in Zanzibar (Bissell 2012). Stonetowns, then, are confronting competing pressures. As one scholar lamented in Zanzibar, they face the looming risk of ‘fossilisation’ (Yahya 1995: 120) – being frozen and reified into sites of heritage, cut off from the historical forces and everyday practices that shaped them as vital centres of Swahili cultural life in the first place. On the other hand, as consultants in Zanzibar phrased it, these cities are ‘under pressure from ill-conceived modern developments’ (Walls and Crispe 1991: n.p.). They are overwhelmed by urbanisation, postcolonial development needs, the spread of informal settlements, and the spectacular impact of large-scale infrastructure projects such as the Lamu Port-Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor Project (LAPSSET), which has sparked protest and activism in the Lamu Archipelago and beyond (Flattau 2012; Bremner 2013). The future of stonetowns seems especially unsettled at the dawn of the new millennium. No question, the cities of the Swahili coast will continue to shift in significance and structure, but whether they will flourish again as cosmopolitan centres of extraversion, creative incorporation and flexible adaptation remains very much to be seen.

References

- Aldrick, J. 1996. ‘Renovating old town Mombasa’. *Kenya Past and Present* 28: 46–9.
- Allen, J. de V. 1979. ‘The Swahili house: cultural and ritual concepts underlying its plan and structure’. In *Swahili Houses and Tombs of the Coast of Kenya*, edited by J. de V. Allen and T. H. Wilson, 1–32. London: Art and Archaeology Research Papers.
- Alpers, E. A. 2014. *The Indian Ocean in World History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bayart, J.-F. 1993. *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*. London: Heinemann.
- Bissell, W. C. 1999. ‘City of stone, space of contestation’. PhD diss., University of Chicago.

- Bissell, W. C. 2005. 'Engaging colonial nostalgia'. *Cultural Anthropology* 20: 215–48.
- Bissell, W. C. 2011. *Urban Design, Chaos, and Colonial Power in Zanzibar*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Bissell, W. C. 2012. 'When the film festival comes to (down)town: transnational circuits, tourism, and the urban economy of images'. In *Global Downtowns*, edited by M. Peterson and G. W. McDonough, 160–85. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Bremner, L. 2013. 'Towards a minor global architecture at Lamu'. *Social Dynamics* 39 (3): 397–413.
- Donley, L. W. 1982. 'House power: Swahili space and symbolic markers'. In *Symbolic and Structural Archeology*, edited by I. Hodder, 63–73. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Donley-Reid, L. 1990. 'A structuring structure: the Swahili house'. In *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space*, edited by S. Kent, 114–26. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Elton, J. F. [1879] 1968. *Travels and Researches among the Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa from the Journals of J. Frederic Elton*, edited by H. B. Cotterill. London: Frank Cass and Co.
- Fair, L. J. 2001. *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890–1945*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Flattau, J. 2012. 'A megaproject transforms Kenya – but not everyone is thrilled'. *Foreign Policy*, 28 May. Available online at: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/05/28/a-megaproject-transforms-kenya-but-not-everyone-is-thrilled/>.
- Fleisher, J. B. and LaViolette, A. 2007. 'The changing power of Swahili houses, fourteenth to nineteenth centuries AD'. In *The Durable House: House Society Models in Archaeology*, edited by R. A. Beck, Jr., 175–97. Carbondale: Center for Archaeological Investigations.
- Ghaidan, U. 1976. *Lamu: A Study in Conservation*. Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau.
- Horton, M. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hoyle, B. 2001. 'Urban renewal in East African port cities: Mombasa's old town waterfront'. *GeoJournal* 53: 183–97.
- Jukes, P. 1990. *A Shout into the Street: An Excursion into the Modern City*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1999. *The Rise and Fall of Swahili States*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira.
- Lanchester, H. V. 1923. *Zanzibar: A Study in Tropical Town Planning*. Cheltenham: Burrow.
- LaNier, R., et al. 1983. *The Stone Town of Zanzibar: A Strategy for Integrated Development*. Zanzibar: Ministry of Lands, Housing, and Construction/UN HABITAT.
- LaViolette, A. 2008. 'Swahili cosmopolitanism in Africa and the Indian Ocean World, AD 600–1500'. *Archaeologies* 4 (1): 24–49.

- Lefebvre, H. 1991 [1974]. *The Production of Space*. Trans. D. Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Lewin, P. E. 1908. 'Zanzibar: the island of cloves'. *The Queen: The Lady's Newspaper* 19 September, 530.
- Meier, P. 2009. 'Objects on the edge: Swahili coast logics of display'. *African Arts* 42 (4): 8–23.
- Middleton, J. 1992. *The World of the Swahili*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Myers, G. A. 1993. 'Reconstructing Ng'ambo: town planning on the other side of Zanzibar'. PhD diss., University of California – Los Angeles.
- Pearson, M. 1998. *Port Cities and Intruders: The Swahili Coast, India, and Portugal in the Early Modern Era*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Playne, S. and Gale, F. H. 1908–9. *East Africa (British)*. London: Foreign and Colonial Compiling and Publishing Co.
- Portal, G. to Sir H. Percy Anderson, 2 November 1891. Rhodes House Library, Oxford, Mss. Afr. s. 105.
- Qian, K., et al. 1982. *Zanzibar Town Master Plan 1982*. Zanzibar: Ministry of Lands, Housing and Construction.
- Robinson, N. J. to Municipal Officer, 10 January 1935. Zanzibar National Archives (ZNA), 'Tourist Traffic, 1934–1939', AB 11/4.
- Sheriff, A. 1987. *Slaves, Spices, and Ivory in Zanzibar*. London: James Currey.
- Sheriff, A. 1995. 'Introduction'. In *Historical Zanzibar: Romance of the Ages*, 6–13. London: HSP Publications.
- Sheriff, A. 2002. 'The spatial dichotomy of Swahili towns: the case of Zanzibar in the nineteenth century'. In *The Urban Experience in Eastern Africa, c. 1750–2000*, edited by A. Burton, 63–81. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Sheriff, A. 2010. *Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean: Cosmopolitanism, Commerce, and Islam*. London: Hurst & Co.
- Siravo, F. 1996. *Zanzibar: A Plan for the Historic Stone Town*. Geneva: Aga Khan Trust for Culture.
- Siravo, F. and Pulver, A. 1986. *Planning Lamu: Conservation of an East African Seaport*. Nairobi: National Museums of Kenya.
- Smee, Captain T. 1844 [1811]. 'Observations during a voyage of research, on the east coast of Africa, from Cape Guardafui south to the island of Zanzibar, in the H.C.'s Cruizers *Ternate*, Capt. T. Smee, and *Sylph* Schooner, Lieut. Hardy'. *Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society* 6: 23–61.
- Walls, A. and Crispe, L. 1991. *The National Heritage of Zanzibar: Its Future*. Zanzibar: report

submitted to the Minister of State for Special Duties, President's Office.

Wynne-Jones, S. 2013. 'The public life of the Swahili stonehouse, 14th–15th centuries AD'. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 32: 759–73.

Yahya, S. S. 1995. 'Zanzibar Stone Town: fossil or foetus?' In *The History and Conservation of Zanzibar Stone Town*, edited by A. Sheriff, 116–20. London: James Currey.

Zanzibar Tourist Task Force 1993. *Guide to Zanzibar*. London: HSP Publications.

52

IDENTITY AND BELONGING ON THE CONTEMPORARY SWAHILI COAST

The case of Lamu

Sarah Hillewaert

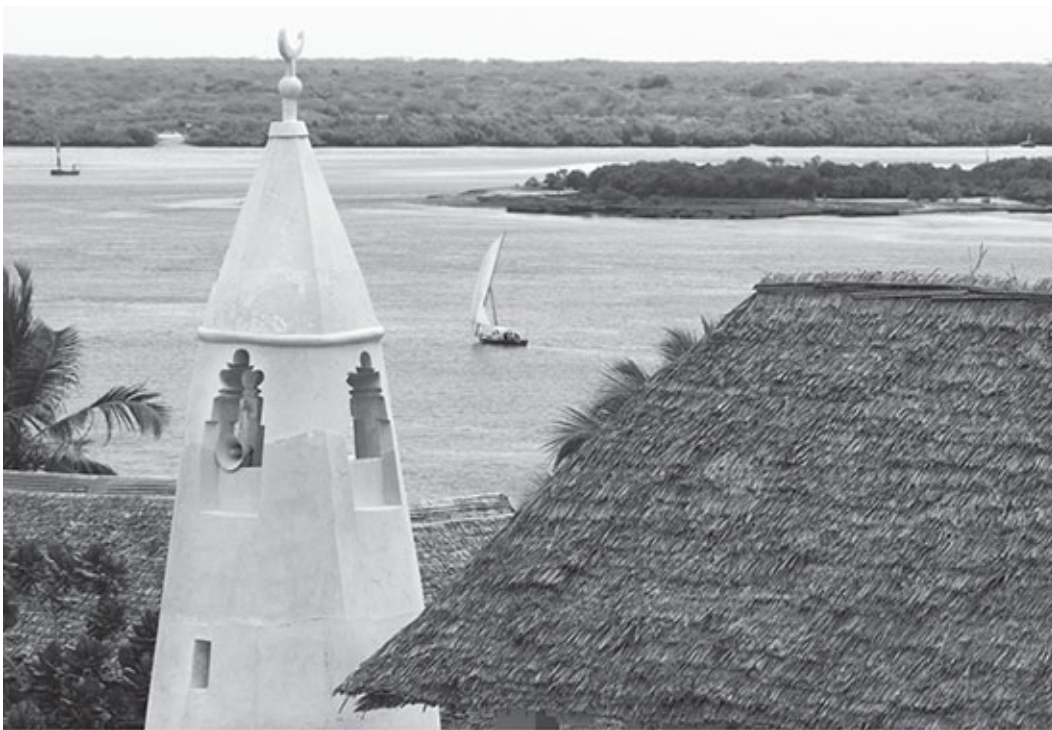
Introduction

White limestone houses overlooking the Indian Ocean, older men sipping Arabic coffee on public benches, veiled women making their way through labyrinths of narrow alleyways; Swahili towns located alongside the eastern African coast have long captured the imagination of (European) travellers and explorers. While for colonial officials the stone mansions and Arab influences, among others, distinguished these cosmopolitan towns from the ‘African’ hinterland (for example, Khalid 1977; Spear 2000; Middleton 2004), contemporary tourists often view the seemingly authentic charm of towns like Zanzibar and Lamu as illustrating the timelessness of the Swahili coast: that here time actually stands still. This supposed immutability of Swahili coastal towns contrasts sharply, however, with the dynamic and disruptive changes these towns have experienced throughout their history (Meier, Sheriff, this volume). In the last century, such changes and correlated debates often pertain to the relationship of the Swahili coast to modern nation states (for example, Mazrui and Mazrui 1995; Brennan 2008, 2012; Glassman 2011; Prestholdt 2014). This chapter contemplates these discussions and takes a closer look at life in contemporary Swahili towns by examining questions of identity and belonging among the inhabitants of Kenya’s Swahili town of Lamu.

Lamu town, located on an island by the same name situated off the coast of Kenya, close to the Somali border (Map 2, p. xxiii), has attracted traders and explorers since its thirteenth-century foundation. This appeal continues to attract visitors today, albeit for different reasons. Rather than its status as a centre for trade and Islamic scholarship, it is

now Lamu's relative isolation and the combination of historical urbanity and simplicity of life that appeals to tourists. With alleys too narrow for two people to pass by each other, Lamu knows no motorised transportation, except for a single car, an ambulance and a couple of motorcycles. All other transport happens on foot, by donkey or boat. While speedboats were introduced several years ago, local fishermen continue to rely on the traditional Swahili dhows (see Gilbert, this volume), and these same boats form a popular tourist excursion. Dhows sailing across the ocean, women donning black veils, men wearing white *kanzu*, and the *muadhin* calling believers to prayer from one of Lamu's 42 mosques; it all plays to the tourist's imagination of the exotic and the 'oriental' ([Figure 52.1](#)).

p.603



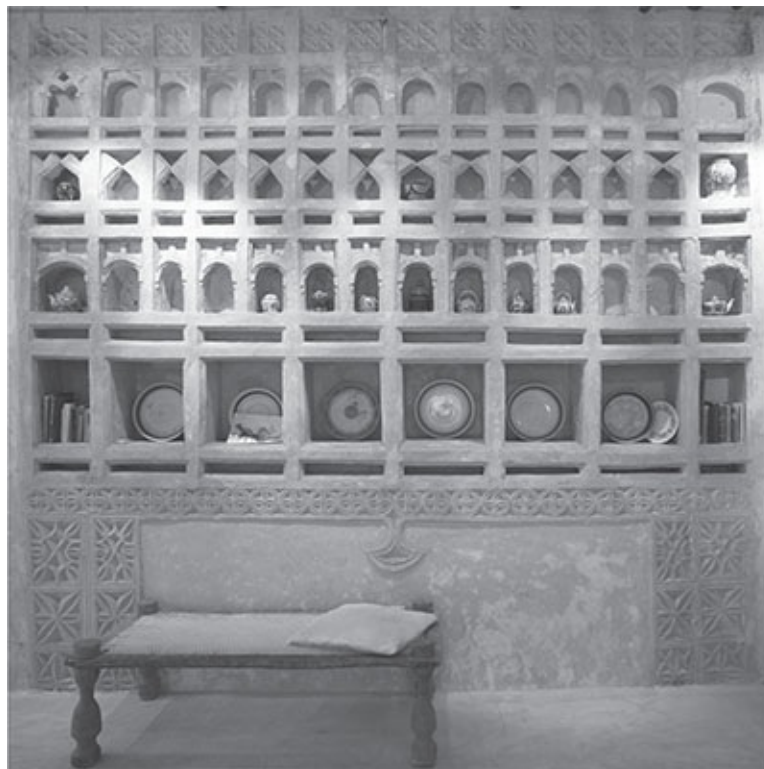
[Figure 52.1](#) Sailing dhow and Shela mosque, Lamu Island (Photograph by E. Lafforgue)

Travel guides describe this UNESCO World Heritage Site as an area frozen in time, where people live as they did a hundred years ago. Like all Swahili city-states, not to mention all places, however, Lamu has experienced transformations throughout its history including the abolition of its slave-based economy and shifts in political and social structure. As maritime polities, Swahili towns incorporated different waves of immigrants from the Arabian Peninsula and South Asia, seemingly effortlessly integrating newcomers into their (stratified) societies. Part of the Indian Ocean world, inhabitants of the Swahili coast were global consumers who prided themselves on displaying their transoceanic interconnectivity by incorporating Arabic, Portuguese, Hindi and Gujarati in their language use, and by displaying paraphernalia from across the globe in their houses

(LaViolette 2008; Prestholdt 2004, 2008; Meier, this volume) ([Figure 52.2](#)). Far from 'stable' or 'frozen', Swahili towns have therefore always dealt with change and adaptation, their social structure (and the notions of lineage, wealth and morality that shaped it) being redefined in accordance with this altering social context.

The capacity to incorporate newcomers, appropriate global trends, and accommodate moments of rupture shaped Swahili culture and allowed the centuries-long survival of coastal towns like Lamu. Struggles over independence and debates over the coast's relation to newly independent nation-states, however, introduced questions about coastal inhabitants' identity and their belonging to the Kenyan and Tanzanian nations (for example, Brennan 2008; Glassman 2011; Willis and Gona 2013). These debates took different shapes in Zanzibar and Lamu, for example, each being defined by the political outlook of the countries to which they now belonged. In Lamu, economic, political and social transformations increasingly affected life in the town, and now cause concern among its inhabitants. Tourists walking through Lamu's alleys might smile at English graffiti on walls of historical mansions, yet these seemingly minor disconnects signal important shifts on a deeper societal level. Although the arrival of immigrants – this time Western expatriates and residents from upcountry Kenya, rather than Arab traders – is not a new phenomenon in itself, and while the displays of international linguistic and material symbols could be viewed as another form of global consumerism, inhabitants of Lamu experience the current transformations as unprecedented (Amidou 2009).

p.604



This chapter aims to give readers a sense of life in Lamu and expose them to the political, economic and social challenges contemporary Kenyan Swahili communities face. I propose that residents of Lamu are not only confronted with the economic impact of the town's altered geopolitical position, and the social consequences of increasing poverty levels; they also face moral dilemmas and seek a balance between (economic) development and (cultural) conservation. Like other Swahili communities, the difficulty for Lamu lies not just with its marginal incorporation in the national economy. After all, the ongoing construction of eastern Africa's biggest international port in the Lamu Archipelago appears to suggest a focus on the region's economic improvement. The government's reluctance to consult Lamu residents in the development of projects like the port, or the recently proposed construction of a coal generating plant, however, hints at deeper issues.

Lamu's inhabitants struggle with the need to distinguish between unwanted (moral and political) impositions, much needed changes, and 'outdated' cultural norms that hinder positive development. This chapter discusses how Lamu residents confront these questions in their daily lives, first by touring through present-day Lamu, and subsequently by discussing the (political) changes that impact on town life. The latter section endeavours to explain why Lamu residents experience current changes as forms of dispossession, thus distinct from the transformations that historically shaped life in their community and along the Swahili coast more broadly.

p.605

Lamu town

Lamu's seafront, as travellers' first encounter with the town, is open and accessible with restaurants, hotels and even a few bars located along it – a comfortable blend of the exotic and familiar ([Figure 52.3](#)). Moving toward the town's interior and understanding its intricate system of back-alleys implies a familiarity with Lamu's culture and people. Many tourists suggest they feel uncomfortable walking towards the 'inner' neighbourhoods of the town, although such uneasiness is not in the least caused by the contrast between their scanty clothing and Lamu women's complete veiling.

Between the seafront and alleys lies Lamu's main street or *usita wa mui*, 'street of the town', as a barrier between the openness of the waterfront and intimacy of the town's interior. Lined with former merchants' houses and broader than the labyrinth of alleys, this is the local shopping street. One row of houses removed from, and parallel to the seafront, *usita wa mui* connects the neighbourhood of Mkomani to the quarter of Langoni. While equally busy, even uninformed visitors notice the difference between the two parts of town. Historically, Mkomani was the area where Lamu's wealthier inhabitants (and slave

owners) resided; they were traders of Omani and Yemeni descent who had settled in the town as early as the thirteenth century, and who controlled its social and political structure (Ylvisaker 1979; Romero 1997; Abungu *et al.* 2009). Slaves, visitors and newly arrived traders resided in Langoni (el Zein 1974). This separation reflected differences in social standing and associated ideologies about respectability and proper conduct. In today's Lamu, the social and spatial distinction between Mkomani and Langoni remains. Sport teams, for example, are divided along these lines, and seating arrangements at weddings reflect the distinction between Mkomani's *wenyeji* (original inhabitants) and the *wageni* (guests) residing in Langoni. Even the ambiance within these neighbourhoods feels distinct.



[*Figure 52.3*](#) The Lamu seafront (Photograph by E. Lafforgue)

p.606

In Mkomani, the main street retains a sense of composure despite being crowded. Hardly any shouting can be heard, nor do people gather around to make conversation. Locals' demeanours tend to be restrained and greetings are kept short. Rather than music, Quran recitation can be heard coming from several of the shops. Walking towards Langoni, one first reaches Mkunguni or the town's main square where men gather on *baraza* surrounding two large trees that provide shelter from the sun. The backdrop for this open space is Lamu's monumental fort. Built in 1813 as protection against possible attacks from rival city-states Mombasa and Pate, it is an icon of Lamu's glorious past (Pouwels 1991). A prison from 1910 until 1984, the fort now hosts offices of the National Museums

of Kenya and is a venue for community events.

Having crossed Mkunguni, one reaches Langoni where the main street is bustling with activity: men and women rush to different stores, vendors sell their goods and children play unsupervised. Greetings are exchanged and groups assemble on the side of the road to catch up on the latest news. Men gather inside *mikahawa* or local cafes and shout orders to the owners. Others crave the snacks sold alongside the street and form groups around the stalls selling meat kebabs and fries. While there is no motorised transportation, traffic jams often occur as handcarts and donkeys make their way through the crowd.

Lamu's quiet backstreets form an escape from the busy main street. Tourists tend to avoid the alleys, and local residents (predominantly women) easily walk from the Mkomani to Langoni side of town without being noticed. Using the alleys has two advantages. Firstly, conversations with passers-by are kept short or non-existent; female acquaintances merely exchange a greeting or quickly inquire about family members' well-being. Men generally do not address women, except for a mumbled *assalaam aleykum*, even if they know each other. This allows pedestrians to reach their destinations much faster than when using the busy *usita wa mui*. Secondly, cooled by a natural ventilation system provided by the ingenious architectural layout of the oldest quarters (*mitaa*), these alleys provide shade and a gentle breeze in otherwise hot weather (Ghaidan 1975).

The above description pertains mostly to Mkomani. This oldest part of Lamu, owned mainly by the town's *waungwana* patrician clans (el Zein 1974), is composed of multi-storey limestone houses with carved doors and a *baraza* in front of their entry. Mkomani is quiet and the paved streets tend to be empty except for a rare man relaxing on the quarter's *baraza*. Walking through these quarters, one often wonders whether the ancient houses are inhabited and what life exists behind the high, bare walls. On a rare occasion, passers-by can catch a glimpse of the interiors, perhaps a lush inside garden and courtyard. Many of these majestic houses are now owned and restored by Westerners who visit their holiday residence once a year. Financial worries and a deteriorating economy forced many *waungwana* families to sell their houses, however reluctantly. The contrast between the locally owned dilapidating houses, and the Western-restored empty Swahili mansions, is iconic of shifts within geopolitics and the impact they have on life in Lamu.

Langoni is an entirely different story. While stone houses eventually replaced wattle-and-daub in this area previously reserved for slaves and visitors, many alleys remain dusty and unpaved. Built gradually as the community expanded, neighbourhoods in Langoni lack structure, and houses seem to have been erected rather randomly. Missing the aforementioned ventilation system, Langoni tends to be hot and humid. Tanzanian or Indian music can be heard blasting from neighbourhood shops. While in Mkomani women remain unseen unless fully covered, women in Langoni often gather on their doorstep, covering their hair with a scarf but without a *buibui* or *abaya*, the black cloak worn by Muslim women, to chat with neighbours and friends. Watching people walk by, they

greet familiar faces, joke with acquaintances and snack on sweets purchased from roadside stores. Shops owned by immigrants from mainland Kenya selling the popular drug *miraa* (or *khat*) form a meeting point for young men.

p.607

On this side of town, the outside walls of houses and stores are decorated with brightly coloured images and slogans. Such paintings display broad linguistic repertoires and a familiarity with global cultural flows. One shows a leaf of cannabis with lyrics from a Bob Marley song or self-written poetry written across it; others display the logos of Manchester United and Liverpool football teams; while still others are seemingly random English proverbs and slogans. 'We fix broken hearts', 'Your best friend could be your worst enemy'. This redefined global orientation is also reflected in neighbourhood names. One of Langoni's quarters carries the name 'Bosnia'. New residential areas, formed by the increasing number of immigrants coming from surrounding islands and the Kenyan mainland, are called 'Kashmiri', 'Kandahar' and 'Pakistan', and are known for drug abuse, including heroin. When asked why these names, inhabitants explain that it articulates their support for conflict-stricken areas of the Muslim world. They suggest that their contemporary experiences as Lamu residents within Kenya resemble the problems faced by Muslim brothers and sisters elsewhere (see Mazrui 1993; Amidou 2009). These naming practices, like the graffiti, signal important shifts in residents' understandings of identity and belonging: of what it means to be 'from Lamu' in present-day Kenya.

I elaborate on the (changing) layout of contemporary Lamu to make familiar the rhythm of town life, but also, and perhaps more importantly, to demonstrate the central role spatial structure plays in residents' conceptions of self, representation of others and evaluation of change. Like other Swahili city-states, Lamu was historically an urban milieu structured around a series of ideological and material contrasts: Mkomani versus Langoni, *wenyeji* (original inhabitants) versus *wageni* (guests), 'Arab' and 'Amu' (an old denomination of the town) versus 'African', stone structures versus wattle-and-daub houses, rich versus poor, free men versus slaves (see Prins 1971). In present-day Lamu, the distinction between Mkomani and Langoni continues to reflect this spatial and social order, but the changes described above illustrate how boundaries are transgressed and redefined.

Architecture, geographies and changes in such layouts sit at the heart of Lamu residents' discourses on longing and loss. It is the space-time construction in the layout of the town – always changing, but organised around locations regarded as 'still points in a turning world' (Eliot 1936 [1960]) – that impact understandings of the town's altered geopolitical position. Even though they are not actually still, buildings, streets and squares form an invitation to imaginings, rather than merely a backdrop against which interactions unfold. In many ways, space is time in Lamu. Just as the sound of donkeys (rather than noise of cars) is an audible reminder of Lamu's physical (and perhaps temporal) remoteness, so are the crumbling buildings an ever-present reminder of both Lamu's

glorious past and current marginalisation. The increasing appearance of churches in the predominantly Muslim town reminds residents of the presence of mainland Christian Kenyans, just as graffiti on walls of seventeenth-century houses are signs of youth's redefined access to global consumerism, or as the needle in the dusty street of Kashmiri reminds passers-by of the drug problem among Lamu youth.

Residents' evaluations of change within Lamu are formulated around these ideological and material contrasts that have shaped life in Swahili towns. While such oppositions, as I will discuss, were never rigid, their transformations in the past were felt to be under the control of Lamu residents (and are often erased in nostalgic recollections of the past). The denial of *waungwana's* moral authority in contemporary Lamu and the spatial, material and social transgressions that accompany it are at the heart of inhabitants' constructions of present-day change as unparalleled.

p.608

Amu – immediately before Kenyan independence

When the British arrived in Lamu in 1895 they found a wealthy stratified society with the patrician clans in the highest positions of respect and government, but with their religious authority overshadowed by newly arrived Hadrami shariffs, and their economic power challenged by both Omani and Yemeni immigrant traders (for example Romero 1997, 1983; Middleton 2004). They also encountered a large slave population, and the colonial abolition of slavery meant a significant reconfiguration of the island's social structure (Romero 1983, 1986). In Lamu, as in other Swahili societies, however, these shifts did not have a detrimental effect. Previous studies of life in Swahili towns suggest that claims to *heshima* (honorable and respectful behaviour), more than notions of an ethnicised identity, permitted the ruling classes to distinguish themselves continuously from both *wageni* (guests) and *washenzi* (ignorant ones), even in contexts of change (for example Fair 2001; McMahon 2006; Glassman 2011). More importantly, self-cultivation as civilised, religious and urban – and thus an appropriation of notions of *heshima* – enabled former slaves and visitors to incorporate themselves gradually into this and other towns' social structure (Fair 2001). Many former slaves travelled to cities like Mombasa in search of employment, where people were unaware of their slave history (Marshall and Kiriamia, this volume). Others travelled less far and settled in villages like Witu, on the Kenyan mainland, closer to Lamu (Romero 1986).

Adherence to understandings of respectability and status was not, however, an absolute ideological domination (Glassman 1991). Although former slaves and newcomers appropriated practices that facilitated integration into Lamu society, and utilised the cultural ideas of their former masters, they also challenged these very same forms. The

adherence to notions of ideal behaviour was then an ‘ambiguous ideological hegemony’ (Glassman 1991: 311). The *waungwana*’s domination was a moving equilibrium, with a continuous negotiation of the terms by which social status could be attributed. Far from rigid, it was the ability to reconceptualise expectations towards displays of status and respectability, in relation to altered social realities, that permitted the retention of a sense of order during times of change.

This adherence to *heshima*, an ideology of respectability defined by Islamic morality, also allowed Lamu inhabitants to distinguish themselves from the African mainland; they were *waungwana* as opposed to mainland *washenzi*. Belonging to the *uungwana* social class entailed being wise and urban, displaying ‘purity, honour, trustworthiness, and courtesy, as well as knowledge of the world that comes only from belief in God’ (Middleton 2004: 4). While social standing derived partly from wealth and genealogy, it also was an ascriptive status to which all could aspire, and it is the latter quality that is described as *uungwana* (Hillewaert 2016). Although this terminology of being upper-class changed from an emphasis on *uungwana* to *ustaarabu* in line with shifts in social and political power in the nineteenth century, with Omani Arabs being privileged over local elites, the essence of these concepts remained the same (McMahon 2006: 200). While *ustaarabu* is frequently translated as ‘Arabness’, the ideological reading remained centred on general respectful conduct: ‘being Muslim, educated, and a good member of the community’ (McMahon 2006: 200).

Ushenzi, on the other hand, stands for barbarity or savagery, such that *washenzi* translates as ‘savages’ or ‘stupid, ignorant ones’: ignorance and ill manners, but also a lack of religious education (see Bromber 2006). *Washenzi* generally referred to non-Muslim mainland residents and (non-Muslim) newcomers, the latter occupying the bottom of the social ladder (Pouwels 1987). These claims to cosmopolitanism and civilisation created an essentialised ontological difference between the ‘savage’ mainland and ‘civilised’ coastal societies positioned in non-coeval chronotopes (Fabian 1983). The adherence to Islam was central to shaping this worldview, as it provided Lamu residents with the notion that they were ‘connected more with their trade partners and coreligionists overseas than with their cultural cousins of the near interior’ (Glassman 2011: 24).

p.609

These ideologies (strengthened by the coastal strip’s status as protectorate under British colonialism) had important implications in debates leading up to Kenya’s independence. Having distinguished themselves from the African hinterland, Lamu residents, together with Kenya’s other coastal inhabitants, were not willing to subject themselves to an African government based in Nairobi. As the negotiations about independence developed, so did calls for coastal autonomy (Brennan 2008; Willis and Gona 2013). Kenya’s coastal residents feared domination by mainland Africans and set up the Mwambao or ‘coastline movement’ to demand autonomy. Divisions within the movement, however, never gave Mwambao the political strength to push for independence. When Zanzibar withdrew its

support, and with the British eager to dispose of a problematic colony, the coastal strip saw itself integrated into Kenya, with the maintenance of only a few privileges, such as the use of *kadhi*'s court (Brennan 2008).

The moment of decolonisation, and Lamu's submission to a mainland (African) government, brought with it economic neo-liberalism and new discourses on development and modernity (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001; Harrison 2010). These processes placed Lamu within the national and global periphery and increasingly challenged the above-discussed understandings of urbanity and modernity, and thus the moral authority on the basis of which Lamu residents distinguished themselves from mainland Kenyans.

Lamu – belonging to Kenya

The incorporation of the coastal strip in the Kenyan nation had important implications for Lamu. First, political shifts resulted in an influx of new (mainland) immigrants. In an attempt to safeguard control over the country, Kenya's first president, Jomo Kenyatta, appointed members of his own Kikuyu ethnicity to government positions across Kenya, including Lamu County. In addition, he encouraged the migration of a community of Kikuyu to the area around Lake Kenyatta, on the mainland close to Lamu. The new settlement received the name Mpeketoni, established to commence labour on a new cotton plantation. Mpeketoni currently is a successful town that thrives on agriculture and has a population twice the size of Lamu (c. 25,000–30,000). Selling their produce in Lamu's markets and attracted by the island's (previously flourishing) tourism industry, many Kikuyu from Mpeketoni also made the move to Lamu itself and form an increasingly visible community there.

Economic measurements taken by the Kenyan government resulted in a second transformation for Lamu with important implications for its prosperity. While the town already faced economic decline under British colonialism, a government ban on the international mangrove trade put an end to Lamu's transoceanic exchange with the Arab world, thereby cutting off its economic lifeline. A decision to lease Kenya's Indian Ocean fishing grounds to international corporations put additional strains on Lamu's economy, limiting where and how much local fishermen could take.

These changes forced Lamu to focus on tourism for its economic survival. This, however, introduced its own challenges. The arrival of Western tourists and resident expatriates came with the establishment of hotels and bars, the majority of which are owned by Westerners and employ mainland (non-Muslim) Kenyans. Tourists also brought with them ways of dressing and interacting that contrasted sharply with local notions of propriety and respectability. While the tourism industry created employment, the young Lamu men working in this sector – organising, for example, sailing trips through the lagoon – endeavoured to devise marketing strategies to appeal better to international

visitors. By adjusting their behaviour – sporting dreadlocks, displaying Rastafari slogans, or organising parties, for example – they became cultural brokers, the tourists' approachable blend between exotic and familiar. Elsewhere I discuss how these *beach boys*, in their attempts to please foreigners, contradict much of what Lamu's *waungwana* are believed to represent (Hillewaert 2016). Historically, *wageni* accommodated the moral and physical needs of the *waungwana* families, rather than the other way around. Visitors to Lamu were expected to respect and adhere to local norms of behaviour; hence, young people's wilful appropriation of Western habits, often in an attempt to please foreigners, is viewed as lacking *heshima*. Lamu elders do not consider *beach boys*' hairstyle, shorts and jewellery as tools used for economic benefit; to them they signal moral decline (Hillewaert 2016).

p.610

While immigration to Lamu is not new, the consequences of contemporary newcomers' arrival are hard to ignore. Historically, immigrants had a vested interest in incorporating themselves within Lamu's social order shaped partly by descent, partly by economic wealth and partly by displays of honour and propriety. Adherence to local ideologies of respectful behaviour came with social and economic status. The town's new residents – both Western expatriates and immigrants from Kenya's mainland – are unapologetic about their separate (ethnic and religious) status and reflect this within everyday practices: in the way they dress, interact and claim space within Lamu. Contrary to immigrants in the past, they are uninterested in integration into Lamu's social hierarchy and bring with them practices that conflict with local understandings of proper conduct. The introduction of bars, consumption of alcohol, open interactions between men and women, and newcomers' residence in areas like Mkomani, for example, demonstrate how the material and social contrasts that structured life in Swahili towns are increasingly transgressed.

The current transformation, then, not only introduces another reshuffling of the social hierarchy; it also challenges norms of behaviour that structure day-to-day interactions. Because these changes are perceived as linked to Lamu's incorporation within Kenya, Lamu residents view them as warranting a contestation of their belonging to the nation.

Ramu – discourses on moral dispossession

People from Lamu have long told me stories of what one might call 'suffering', even though they themselves never use that term. When I started my research on Lamu youth and their everyday practices in a context of change, the first stories I was told by youth and elders alike were narrations of historical injustices that, they claimed, underlay the current moral shifts and precarity of the government's unfair treatment of Lamu residents. Rather than using the language of suffering, they viewed their current situation as a result of the

encroaching global efforts to disenfranchise Muslims, and they frequently compared Lamu to Palestine (see Mazrui 1993; Amidou 2009).

These sentiments are often summarised in one sentence: '*siku hizi si Amu, wala si Lamu, ni Ramu*'. 'These days it is not Amu, nor is it Lamu, it is Ramu'. While seemingly a mere play on words, it evokes the island's complex sociopolitical history and my interlocutors' stance toward Lamu's contemporary social context and its relation to the Kenyan nation. Amu, the historical denomination of the island town, speaks to its success as an international centre of trade and Islamic scholarship. Residents who use 'Amu' today call upon this historical eminence. Under British colonial rule, and with the island's incorporation into Kenya in 1963, the town's official name became Lamu. With this subjection to a mainland government came the first significant shifts in the island's economic and political power. The denomination Ramu refers to the town's current position and captures an overall feeling of (moral, political, and economic) dispossession – a sense of being subjected to the whims of the Kenyan government. Although most Kikuyu speak Kiswahili with different degrees of fluency, many of them have a distinct accent. Most characteristic is the mispronunciation of /l/ as /r/. Kikuyu might then be heard referring to Lamu as 'Ramu'. In recalling the historical trajectory from a prosperous Amu, to colonially ruled Lamu, to Kikuyu-dominated Ramu, my interlocutors take a stance toward the current transformations on the island and to the Kenyan nation more broadly. None of the current events in Lamu, and residents' responses to them, can be understood without having insight into the political history of the region, and local residents' critical assessments of government practices, all pointedly reflected in this one statement about Amu-Lamu-Ramu.

p.611

Conclusion

People from Lamu are increasingly confronted with the awareness that new immigrants and new global cultural flows challenge the safeguarding of local norms and values (Fuglesang 1994). Of course, these changes also created new imaginings and opportunities, especially for those Lamu residents who historically belonged to the lower echelons of society. The overall assessment of current (economic, political, social) transformations, however, remains negative, and is evaluated in relation to Lamu's belonging to Kenya.

Until about 50 years ago, sitting on one of Lamu's *baraza* while sipping Arabic coffee formed the epitome of urban flair. Now it is depicted either as an outdated practice by local youth, or as an example of Swahili 'laziness' by mainland Kenyans. Those same elders watch young men – their sons, grandsons or nephews – walk by with Western girlfriends

while wearing T-shirts with slogans such as ‘Spanish sex instructor’. Yet, the young men can provide for their families and pray next to their elders. While people worry about creating access to education and health care, or about fighting drug abuse and HIV/AIDS, there is also a concern with what (economic) changes mean in terms of altering moral dispositions and shifting understandings of Islamic propriety. Indeed, for a town that has considered itself urban and cosmopolitan for centuries, but is now struggling for its survival, what does development entail? (see Caplan and Topan 2004; Caplan 2009).

Lamu youth navigate these different considerations as they endeavour to negotiate their position in an altered society, and contemplate what it means to be ‘from Lamu’ in contemporary Kenya. These contemplations, however, are not only influenced by local values, but are also shaped by other discourses: on political marginalisation, economic deterioration and global Islam. The question for Lamu youth is then not merely what propriety entails in present-day Swahili societies; they are also confronted with reconsiderations of what it means to be Swahili and Muslim in the current global context. These questions have become particularly pressing in relation to recent events that further undermine the already unstable economy of the island. National and international inquiries into terrorist activity within the region, warnings against and actual attacks by Somali pirates, and the recent (and ongoing) deadly assaults by the Somali Islamist organisation Al-Shabaab in Lamu County (and Kenya more broadly) resulted in an increased military presence in Lamu and a targeting of (male) coastal Muslim youth in government investigations (see Prestholdt 2014). In addition, these events and the international travel warnings that followed translated into an absence of tourists in Lamu and the closure of several hotels, resulting in an all-time low for Lamu’s economy. Government projects like the construction of the international port are therefore increasingly appealing to the local population because these schemes promise much-needed jobs and economic development. There is, however, a strong awareness that these changes are not much under the control of Lamu residents themselves, and will bring additional challenges to their (Islamic) lifestyle.

p.612

‘*Siku hizi si Amu, wala si Lamu, ni Ramu.*’ Friends frequently repeat the statement when we discuss the ongoing struggles in Lamu; it is written in Facebook status updates and included in text messages that report on current happenings on the island. Far from a slogan that inspires action and protest, it captures a sense of loss, disempowerment and uncertainty about the future of a town that many international tourists still consider an Indian Ocean paradise.

Acknowledgement

I am grateful to Gillian Feeley-Harnik for referring me to T. S. Eliot (1960 [1936]).

References

- Abungu, G., Abungu, L., Beckwith, C., Fisher, A., Coulson, D. and Pavitt, N. 2009. *Lamu: Kenya's Enchanted Island*. New York: Rizzoli.
- Amidou, A. A. 2009. 'The role of Islam in the political and social perceptions of the Waswahili of Lamu'. In *Knowledge, Renewal and Religion: Repositioning and Changing Ideological and Material Circumstances among the Swahili on the East Africa Coast*, edited by K. Larsen, 236–60. Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute.
- Brennan, J. R. 2008. 'Lowering the Sultan's flag: sovereignty and decolonization in coastal Kenya'. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50 (4): 831–61.
- Brennan, J. R. 2012. *Taifa: Making Nation and Race in Urban Tanzania*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Bromber, K. 2006. 'Ustaarabu: a conceptual change in Tanganyikan newspaper discourse in the 1920s'. In *The Global Worlds of the Swahili: Interfaces of Islam, Identity and Space in 19th and 20th-Century East Africa*, edited by R. Loimeier and R. Seesemann, 67–82. Berlin: Lit Verlag.
- Caplan, P. 2009. 'Understanding modernity/ies on Mafia Island, Tanzania: the idea of a moral community'. In *Knowledge, Renewal and Religion: Repositioning and Changing Ideological and Material Circumstances among the Swahili on the East Africa Coast*, edited by K. Larsen, 213–35. Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute.
- Caplan, P. and Topan, F. 2004 *Swahili Modernities: Culture, Politics, and Identity on the East Coast of Africa*. Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Comaroff, J. and Comaroff, J. (Eds) 2001. *Millennial Capitalism and the Culture of Neoliberalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- el Zein, A. H. M. 1974. *The Sacred Meadows: A Structural Analysis of Religious Symbolism in an East African Town*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Eliot, T. S. 1960 [1936]. *Four Quartets*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Fabian, J. 1983. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Fair, L. 2001. *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890–1945*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Fuglesang, M. 1994. *Veils and Videos: Female Youth Culture on the Kenyan Coast*. Stockholm: Stockholm Studies in Social Anthropology.
- Ghaidan, U. 1975. 'Lamu: a case study of the Swahili town'. *The Town Planning Review* 45 (1): 84.
- Glassman, J. 1991. 'The bondsman's new clothes: the contradictory consciousness of slave

- resistance on the Swahili coast'. *Journal of African History* 32 (2): 277–312.
- Glassman, J. 2011. *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Harrison, G. 2010. *Neoliberal Africa: The Impact of Global Social Engineering*. London: Zed Books.
- Hillewaert, S. 2016. 'Whoever leaves his traditions is a slave: contemporary notions of servitude in an East African town'. *Africa* 86 (3): 425–46.
- Khalid, A. 1977. *The Liberation of Swahili from European Appropriation*. Vol. 1. Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau.
- LaViolette, A. 2008. 'Swahili cosmopolitanism in Africa and the Indian Ocean world, AD 600–1500'. *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress* 4 (1): 24–49.
- Mazrui, Ali A. S. 1993. 'The Black Intifadah? Religion and rage at the Kenyan coast'. *Journal of Asian and African Affairs* 4: 87–93.
- Mazrui, A. A. and Mazrui, A. M. 1995. *Swahili State and Society: The Political Economy of an African Language*. London: James Currey.
- p.613
- McMahon, E. 2006. 'A solitary tree builds not: *heshima*, community, and shifting identity in post-emancipation Pemba Island'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 39 (2): 197.
- Middleton, J. 2004. *African Merchants of the Indian Ocean: Swahili of the East African Coast*. Long Grove: Waveland Press.
- Pouwels, R. L. 1987. *Horn and Crescent: Cultural Change and Traditional Islam on the East African Coast, 800–1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pouwels, R. L. 1991. 'The Battle of Shela: the climax of an era and a point of departure in the modern history of the Kenya coast'. *Cahiers d'Etudes africaines* 31 (123): 363–89.
- Prestholdt, J. 2004. 'On the global repercussions of East African consumerism'. *American Historical Review* 109 (3): 755–81.
- Prestholdt, J. 2008. *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Prestholdt, J. 2014. 'Politics of the soil: separatism, autochthony, and decolonization at the Kenyan coast'. *Journal of African History* 55 (2): 249–70.
- Prins, A. H. J. 1971. *Didemic Lamu: Social and Spatial Structure*. Groningen: Instituut voor Culturele Anthropologie der Rijks-Universiteit.
- Romero, P. W. 1983. 'Laboratory for the oral history of slavery: the island of Lamu on the Kenya coast'. *American Historical Review* 88 (4): 858–82.
- Romero, P. W. 1986. 'Where have all the slaves gone? Emancipation and post-emancipation in Lamu, Kenya'. *Journal of African History* 27 (3): 497–512.

- Romero, P. W. 1997. *Lamu: History, Society, and Family in an East African Port City*. Princeton: Marcus Wiener Publishers.
- Spear, T. 2000. 'Early Swahili history reconsidered'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 33 (2): 257–90.
- Willis, J. and Gona, G. 2013. 'Pwani C Kenya? Memory, documents and secessionist politics in coastal Kenya'. *African Affairs* 112 (446): 48–71.
- Ylvisaker, M. 1979. *Lamu in the Nineteenth Century: Land, Trade, and Politics*. Boston: African Studies Center, Boston University.

53

PATE

George Okello Abungu

Introduction

Pate is located on the northern Swahili coast, in the Lamu Archipelago, Kenya. It is one of the earliest and most magnificent towns on this coast, exhibiting rich heritage in history, archaeology and architecture, and also intangible heritage ranging from crafts, building technology and religious festivals to food and foodways dating from hundreds of years ago. It is a Swahili town of deep historical significance that has played a major role in the construction and reconstruction of Swahili identity and place. This chapter provides a discussion of Pate and its people over time and space, as well as the dynamic relationship between the peoples of Pate, their environment and heritage resources.

Pate is one of the earliest and largest sites on the entire coast (Wilson 2016). It is located on an island of the same name, the largest of three forming the Lamu Archipelago, along with Manda and Lamu, all inhabited from at least the eighth/ninth century CE and with remains dating to that period. Other smaller islands, Ndau and Kiwayu, are located to the northeast and today are occupied by fishermen and farmers.

Pate was home to numerous settlements in ancient times, many of which continue to be inhabited. Pate town was the most important, at least by the fifteenth century, although in earlier times 'it might have been rivaled or surpassed by Shanga' (Wilson 2016: 89); Siyu and Faza were also significant settlements and, like Pate, are still occupied with sizeable populations.

Pate town sits on a ridge on the southeastern tip of the island, connected to the sea by a mangrove-fringed creek. It is protected from the sea by a small uninhabited island called Shanga. Its location at the end of a creek where only small vessels can go at high tide makes this seem an improbable place to situate a trading port, although many Swahili settlements were located in such protected settings that required local knowledge for navigation (Abungu 1996: 51). At low tide the foreshore dries out for kilometres and one

can only reach the town by foot, wading through shallow pools of water.

History

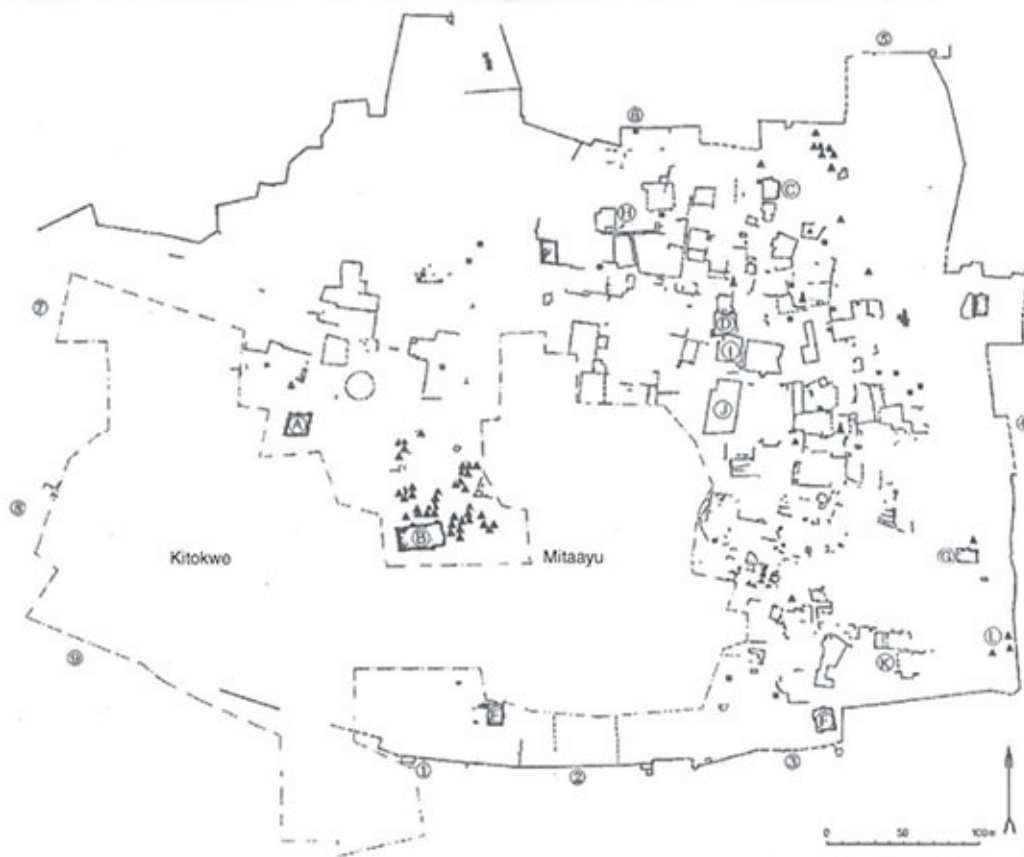
Rich in archaeological remains, historical narratives and architectural heritage, Pate has not received the same intellectual scrutiny as its historical rival Lamu. Pate and Lamu competed for political dominance of this part of the coast. From the sixteenth century Pate achieved great prominence, built on the political authority of the Nabahani clan and their successful alliances with the Omanis. Economically, Pate was also a crucial centre of trade, producing Pate cloth from local cottons woven with imported threads. It was in demand along the coast and even Portuguese traders were forced to deal in Pate cloth rather than in fabrics brought direct from Goa (Prestholdt 1998; Vernet 2005). That ended in Pate's defeat during the eighteenth century, along with its ally Mombasa, at the hands of Lamu and its allies, from which it never recovered. Lamu was catapulted to a leadership role in the region through Omani interest and investment here, and through its establishment as a centre of Sufi Islam; this dominance continues to the present day. There is, however, no doubt that Pate was one of the most important entities of its kind as a trading centre, political unit and centre of Swahili language and civilisation which attracted many, including, for a short time, the Portuguese.

p.615

People, memory and spaces

Pate is an excellent example of the diversity in Swahili society, one influenced by its own experiences of oneness and yet at the same time structured relations of difference; of histories and traditions; of seeking identities or imagined identities; of multiple origins; of memories of sometimes unequal past relations among and between groups; of belonging or not to royalty; of claims and counter claims of blood relation to the Prophet; of a society striving to maintain its conservative nature as deeply religious and 'homogenous' in a fast-changing world.

Pate today is a small version of the earlier town. Enclosed within the ruined ancient town wall, the total area, including the archaeological site, retains domestic and public structures of multiple storeys. The present town is divided into two sections, *Kitokwe* (*Kichokwe*), the larger part, and *Mitaayu* or upper ward, the smaller section ([Figure 53.1](#)). The two are divided by what I have called a 'no-man's' land, with the shared spaces of the Friday Mosque and historical tombs located within it (Abungu 1996: 51). The original Pate comprised both the stone-built area that was possibly for the elite (*waungwana*) and the earth-built sprawling area outside the town wall for commoners, new arrivals and slaves.



[*Figure 53.1*](#) Map of Pate, showing divisions mentioned in the text

p.616

The present two sections would originally have corresponded to two groups residing in the town, with the occupants of Mitaayu claiming descent from the Nabahany family, the former rulers of Pate, while those of Kitokwe (who are often silent and silenced) are said to be the descendants of strangers and newcomers (a softer and more polite way of saying ‘of slave and other descent’).

However, the silences and denials blur these supposed lines.

For a visitor, the deep-rooted division between the two parts and their people is not easily visible, as people mingle freely, pray in the same mosques, own businesses on both sides (or at least those from Mitaayu own businesses in Kitokwe) and being a small town everybody knows everybody. It takes a long time before a visitor can discern this social division, which is present and can be seen even in social functions.

(Abungu 1996: 51.)

The historical narratives of the past, including oral histories of difference argued on the basis of origins/identity and class, and reinforced by colonial divide-and-rule strategies and early scholarship, dwelt more on differences than similarities and continue to shape people’s perceptions and relations in Pate. These have been reinforced in the division of living spaces, despite common religion and sharing of larger town-spaces. This may well have roots in the deeper past, despite the lack of unequivocal and uncontested

archaeological evidence, except the occupation of areas outside the walled town. Pate is a special case where social stratification is still evident in use of space and representation of memories, and yet the people of Pate also see themselves as a united entity, with common purpose and shared interests and history. They consider the rich heritage of Pate as exhibited by magnificent buildings, town wall and other archaeological heritage as their common heritage to protect and use.

Archaeological investigation

Neville Chittick was the first archaeologist to carry out work in Pate town in 1965. His work involved surveying the site and drawing some structures; he also opened seven test pits in three areas to verify the dates of some structures. Chittick (1965) concluded that Pate was not built until the fourteenth century and that, during its early days, it was a poor settlement. He further observed that Pate attained real wealth only in the sixteenth century but did not reach its greatest prosperity until the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Thomas Wilson and Athman Lali Omar (1997) carried out small-scale research, opening a sondage around the Mosques of Bwana Bakari and Nuru in the early 1980s. The presence of Sasanian-Islamic wares with dates of the ninth to tenth centuries in the lower levels of their trenches suggested that Pate was founded earlier than suggested by Chittick. These studies were complemented by those of Usam Ghaidan, an architect who in 1975 carried out a survey and drew a map of the known ruined mosques, a few houses and the town wall.

In 1991, with a team of researchers from Fort Jesus and Lamu Museums and with Swedish colleagues, I carried out an investigation that included excavations at the Mosque of Bwana Bakari, a comprehensive survey of the site and its monumental and archaeological heritage, and the town wall. This led to a deeper understanding of the town's origins and location, its production processes, settlement hierarchies and spatial organisation (Abungu 1996). The two trenches excavated produced material confirming early dates for Pate. Trench 1, dug to 3.5 m, indicated a burial practice of laying white sand below the body. This was interpreted to be a symbolic purification of the dead person's soul (Abungu 1996: 56). Although very few graves have been excavated on the Swahili coast, this practice does seem to be more widespread, and white sand is also deposited in the foundations of mosques (Fleisher *et al.* 2015). Trench II, dug to 4.1 m, produced local sherds of both decorated and undecorated forms of necked jars of the Early Tana Tradition (Abungu 1990; Horton 1996) with imported ones being mainly Sasanian-Islamic and therefore confirming early dates for Pate.

The excavations exposed successive burials and numerous buildings including mud-and-thatch over a long period of time. Other practices that would connote some kind of ritual activity included the burial of a complete chicken skeleton in a pot found in association with the foundation of the Mosque of Bwana Bakari (Abungu 1996: 57). The other finds included celadon, polychromes, monochromes, various types of Islamic wares and local wares, and a rich heritage of architectural style and technology.

Architectural heritage

To understand the power, prestige and position of Pate, one has to understand the architectural and archaeological heritage of the town as reflected on the landscape today, including population dynamics through time.

What is seen above ground today can be said to represent Pate of the fifteenth to eighteenth century, at its peak of power, opulence and organised political leadership. The 28 ha. of walled town and 20 ha. of settlement originally outside the walled town, could have accommodated 10,000 to 11,000 people, a major coastal settlement by any standards.

While many structures survive even long after their abandonment, much of the original town now forms great heaps of rubble, mostly from house ruins, but also created by modern Pate farmers who have turned over large areas of the earlier levels. The site also suffered in the past from burning of stones from the original houses to make lime for construction of new houses. Fitzgerald (1898), writing nearly 120 years ago, suggested that many now-ruined structures were intact at that time, so this seems to have been a twentieth-century phenomenon.

While the current standing structures represent houses, tombs and mosques, the latter are more represented with many exhibiting the beautifully decorated *mihirabs* which the faithful face while praying. The mosques of Pate, including one with a double *mihrab*, are delicately decorated with intricately carved *Porites* coral including with verses from the Koran. Pate masons were known for their mastery of working with this material.

A town of more than ten mosques, at its peak Pate had the power and means to compete with any other power on the Swahili coast. Islam was central to its functioning. But, even more importantly, as these mosques are often dated and are never targets of destruction unless another is to be built on the same spot, they provide us with reasonably good chronological and historical records.

Through an inscription commemorating its builder, we know that the Mosque of Bwana Bakari is particularly important, as it was Sultan Abubakar who is reported to have been executed by the Portuguese in 1688 (Chittick 1968). Bwana Tamu, the builder of a second mosque, ruled in the eighteenth century. The practice of building mosques on the same site as an older mosque is not only demonstrated in the excavation of the Bwana

Bakari Mosque, but also in the present *Mskiti wa Ujumaa* (Friday Mosque). Whether the earlier structure in this case was also on 'no man's' land remains to be demonstrated. What may be deduced is that the earlier mosque or even some now below it could have been associated with the royal tombs of antiquity found adjacent to it.

p.618

Even the naming of the mosques is full of meaning and messages. While many were named after their founders and builders, many also have names that suggest the town was characterised by a diverse population; others are even named after common animals. Thus, among the remaining seven there is *Mskiti wa Pokomo* that translates to the Mosque of the Pokomo, a group from the inland Tana River region known to have had a strong relationship with Pate. Another is *Mskiti wa Funda or Punda* that literally means the Mosque of the Donkey, probably a geographical and even appreciative inspiration.

Pate is divided and organised into wards or *mitaa*. This is a common feature of Swahili towns. Each often has a local mosque for daily prayers, with the Friday mosque used for the full congregation. In Pate, although it is not easy to discern the exact boundaries of the wards in the past, people know them and identified the following: in Kitokwe, there were *Kitukani*, *Kanaani*, *Shinda Kazi*, *Utukuni* and *Jizani* among others. In Mitayuu there were *Mitapwani*, *Kiungani*, *Wangandu*, *Gongwa* and *Kitangu Yumbe*. Like the mosques, these names have meanings, and as in modern Swahili settlements, they represent an occurrence in time, perhaps a difficult situation mellowed through naming, or a recognition of happenings elsewhere. It is not uncommon to notice in Swahili towns with a bulging population of newcomers and growth of informal settlements with harsh conditions, poignant ward names such as Kashmir, Bangladesh or Baghdad. In Pate in the past, a ward name such as *Shinda Kazi* might have meant 'you are overstaying at work place' or 'you conquer or defeat the work'; *Kandaani*, which means 'stay inside', could have been a poetic warning.

The houses found in Pate spanning the fifteenth to eighteenth century were elaborate, with internal toilet facilities and some still exhibiting elaborately decorated ablution areas. Many houses were elaborately and elegantly decorated with niches, plasterwork of various designs, and motifs, arched doorways and carved doors. Like the *mihirabs*, delicately decorated edgings and niches around doorways were made of *Porites* coral, with niches holding Chinese porcelains and Islamic wares valued at the time as symbols of prestige and status. As noted in Abungu (1996: 53; see also Donley-Reid 1990), 'the plasterwork and niches located in the *ndani* (inner rooms of the houses) have both aesthetic and functional values in Swahili houses. They serve as beautiful backdrops to wedding ceremonies, reduce echoes and hold prized collections of porcelains and other decorative wares'.

Many of the big buildings that formed the seat of government could have been in the centre of town, as noted in the historical records and oral traditions, an area now under intensive tobacco cultivation. Some of the rulers are buried there in tombs, although

compared with Ishikani, Mwana, Shanga and Siyu, Pate's tombs here are simpler in form and construction. This may conform with strict Islamic tradition that calls for simple burials; given the numerous mosques, Pate was possibly a location of religious puritanism in its peak centuries.

At its peak, a wall 60 cm thick encircled the town, built of coral rubble and mortar with a ridged coping often meant to ensure rain water does not go into the wall but flows down seamlessly to protect the integrity of the wall. The structure had bastions and nine gates, namely: *Lango la Minazini*, *Lango la Siu*, *Lango la Kitangu Yumbe*, *Lango la Gerezani* or *Benderani*, *Lango la Fundikani*, *Lango la Kipengeeni*, *Lango la Bwantiti*, *Lango la Shindakasi*, and *Lango la Unngwi* or *Wnagandu*. While many of the names refer to various *mitaa*, others refer to other towns or features such as a coconut farm.

A town of narrow streets of less than 3 m wide, Pate like other Swahili towns also provided interconnecting linkages or 'bridges' between buildings at roof level that allowed closely related families to interact, for convenience and privacy for women.

Known for its skilled artisans and craftsmen, Pate has always maintained its artistry in wood carving and metal work, especially in copper and gold moulded into a variety of body decorations for women. This tradition continued to the present, with artisans accorded respect as creators with privileged knowledge. Although today cloth-making is not common in town, its past importance is demonstrated by the presence of numerous spindle whorls for spinning and weaving in the archaeological record, as well as the mention of such an exercise and trade in oral tradition and historical records.

p.619

References

- Abungu, G. H. O. 1990. 'Communities on the River Tana, Kenya: an archaeological study of relations between the delta and the river basin, 700–1890 AD'. PhD diss., University of Cambridge.
- Abungu, G. H. O. 1996. 'Pate: a Swahili town revisited'. *Kenya Past and Present* 28: 50–60.
- Chittick, H. N. 1965. 'The Shirazi colonization of East Africa'. *Journal of African History* 6 (3): 275–94.
- Chittick, H. N. 1968. 'The coast before the arrival of the Portuguese'. In *Zamani: A Survey of East African History*, edited by B. Ogot, 98–114. Nairobi: East African Publishing House.
- Donley-Reid, L. W. 1990. 'The power of Swahili porcelain, beads and pottery'. In *Powers of Observation: Alternative Views in Archaeology*, edited by S. M. Nelson and A. B. Kehoe, 47–59. Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association 2.

- Fitzgerald, W. W. A. (1898) *Travel in the Coastlands of British East Africa and the Islands of Zanzibar and Pemba*. London: Dawsons.
- Fleisher, J., Lane, P., LaViolette, A., Horton, M., Pollard, E., Quintana Morales, E., *et al.* 2015. 'When did the Swahili become maritime?' *American Anthropologist* 117 (1): 100–15.
- Horton, M. C. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Prestholdt, J. 1998. *As Artistry Permits and Custom May Ordain: The Social Fabric of Material Consumption in the Swahili World, circa 1450 to 1600*. Evanston: Northwestern University.
- Vernet, T. 2005. 'Les cités-etats Swahili de l'archipel de Lamu, 1585–1810: dynamiques endogenes, dynamiques exogenes'. PhD diss., Centre de recherches africaines, Université Paris I Panthéon – Sorbonne.
- Wilson, T. 2016. *Swahili Monuments and Architecture North of the Tana River* (2nd Ed.). Mombasa: National Museums of Kenya.
- Wilson, T. H. and Omar, A. L. 1997. 'Archaeological investigations at Pate'. *Azania* 32: 31–76.

54

MOMBASA

Archaeology and History

Herman Kiriama

Introduction

Mombasa, the second largest city in Kenya and largest seaport on the eastern African coast, sits on a small, well-sheltered coralline island of 14.5 km², with deep-water anchorages on both east and west (Map 1, p. xxii). Today the island is connected to the mainland by a causeway, bridge and ferry; it is bounded by the Port Kilindini and Port Reitz creek complexes to the south and west, and the Mombasa Harbour and Port Tudor complexes to the east and north.

‘Mombasa’ has been used to refer to the island, town, and sometimes by non-coastal people to the Kenyan coast; Al-Idrisi (CE 1100–1166) talks of a town known as ‘Manisa’ or ‘Manrisa’, where the ‘King of Zanzibar’ lived, likely a reference to Mombasa. In his account of his 1331 visit to the coast, Ibn Battuta mentions ‘Monbasa’, between Malindi and Zanzibar, where the King of Zanzibar resided, corroborating Idrisi’s account (Hourani 1995; Freeman-Grenville 1962, Were *et al.* 1984). It is also known locally as Mvita, possibly from the Swahili word for war, or after Shehe Mvita, an early ‘Shirazi’ ruler of the town (Nurse and Spear 1985).

Historical background

The date of the island’s first settlement is unclear (Matthew 1963: 94–127; Prins 1967: 40–42), but several early historical accounts include a reference in Al-Idrisi’s *Geography of the World*, who noted that it was ruled and populated by blacks (Berg and Walter 1968; Cerulli *et al.* 1970). Al-Idrisi mentions that Mombasa was a prosperous trading town with a well-

protected harbour suitable for shipping: ‘this town is on the sea and on the edge of a big creek up which a ship can sail for two days’ (Cerulli *et al.* 1970: 59–60; Freeman-Grenville 1962: 19–20). Duarte Barbosa, a Portuguese voyager of the fifteenth century, wrote that ‘Mombasa is a place of great traffic and a good harbour where small crafts and great ships were moored, bound to Sofala, Cambay, Malindi and other ports’ (Freeman-Grenville 1962: 131–2).

Ibn Battuta, thought to have visited Mombasa in 1332, speaks of pious Sunni Muslims of the Shafi’ite school, who, though they live in poverty (in earth-and-thatch houses?), have well-constructed wooden mosques (Middleton 1992).

p.621

Archaeological evidence

Japanese scholars working in the southern mainland region of Mombasa (Omi 1982; Omi *et al.* 1984) have shown that the region was occupied during the Early, Middle and Late Stone Ages. During the latter, hunter-gatherer-fishers lived there with microlithic technology, a coastal variant of the classic ‘Wilton’ complex that characterises the Rift and parts of the interior (Breen and Lane 2003: 175). Early farming and iron-using communities were present along the low coastal plain north of Mombasa, and the highland zone immediately inland from the southern Kenya/northern Tanzania coast between c. 2300 and 1500 bce (Soper 1967; Helm 2000).

Excavations on Mombasa Island and town (Kirkman 1974; Sassoon 1980, 1982a; Abungu 1985) have shown that it may have been settled as early as the sixth century CE. A 2001 foreshore survey of the north-eastern part of the island, overlooking Tudor Creek, revealed quantities of TT/TIW ceramics datable to the sixth to ninth centuries (McConkey and McErlean 2007). Rescue excavations in the same area by Hamo Sassoon, at the site of Mombasa County Referral Hospital (formerly Coast General Hospital), show that the ancient town (Mji wa Kale) may have been located here, an extensive settlement dating from c. 1000 to abandonment or destruction in the early sixteenth century (Sassoon 1980). A more urbanised settlement on Ras Kiberamni appears to have commenced in the eleventh–twelfth centuries, and it is here that Ibn Battuta spent a night in 1331 (McConkey and McErlean 2007). Sassoon’s excavations revealed that construction of stone houses likely began in the first half of the thirteenth century (Sassoon 1980), comparable with elsewhere on the coast. Portuguese written sources also show that on three occasions – 1505, 1526, 1589 – Mombasa was destroyed by the Portuguese (Berg 1968: 45), which likely contributed to the abandonment of Mji wa Kale (McConkey and McErlean 2007).

By the fifteenth century, Mombasa’s residents comprised two confederations, with twelve clans. The confederations had independent governments with a *tamim* or

community leader assisted by a council of elders (*wazee*) (Abungu 1985). The first confederation was known as Miji Tisa, made up of nine clans which occupied present-day Mombasa Old Town. Abungu (1985: 3) argues that the clan names suggest movement of people south from the Lamu Archipelago and the northern coastline, probably during the conquest of Mombasa as mentioned in the *Pate Chronicle*. The second confederation had three clans, Miji Mitatu. This group is supposed to have arrived in Mombasa in the late fifteenth, early sixteenth century, settling first at Mtongwe on the southern mainland before moving to the southern part of the island at Tuaca (Kiriamu 1987). Ceramic finds there indicate its habitation contemporaneous with the later phase of the town, near Ras Kiberamni (twelfth–sixteenth centuries), after which it seems to have been abandoned (Sassoon 1982a: 94). Godhino de Eredia's plan (c. 1615–1625) designates 'Tuaca' with a single building, along with a harbour 'Barra de Tuaca'. A gravestone possibly associated with a ruined mosque in the town bore the inscription '1462' (Gray 1947: 21). In 2001, a test trench opened by McConkey and McErlean (2007) along Mama Ngina Drive revealed remains of coral walls with two phases of construction. Local pottery, glazed green or blue Islamic wares and some Chinese celadon were recovered.

The dates of Tuaca's occupation notwithstanding, seventeenth-century Portuguese and German maps show it as a large settlement covered with large trees. The maps also show two pillars: Mbaraki, and a second that was presumably even taller, since fallen. West of Mbaraki pillar was a mosque excavated by Sassoon in 1977 and Richard Wilding in 1987. From his excavations, Sassoon concluded that the Mbaraki mosque was built c. mid-fifteenth century as part of Tuaca, and in use until the early sixteenth century. After abandonment, the mosque ruin was used for spirit worship, a practice that continues today. Using Portuguese plans of the period as evidence, Sassoon (1982a: 96) thinks Mbaraki pillar was likely erected c. 1700, 'as a centre for consultations with the spirit world, for which purpose it is still used at the present day'. Within the modern community it is thought that the pillar was built by an Omani Arab to thank God for releasing him from the harm of evil spirits; the community regularly burns incense and brings offerings of food and rose water to appease those spirits. Swatches of red, white and black cloth are also hung on an adjacent baobab for similar reasons.

p.622

Other features of Tuaca include a demolished ruin of the Kilindini mosque, also known as Mskiti wa Thelatha Taita (Mosque of the Three Tribes) (Kirkman 1974: 103); the remains of the town wall adjacent to the Likoni Ferry roundabout (demolished to allow for construction of molasses silos), and a concentration of baobab trees.

At the peak of Tuaca's prosperity the ruler of Zanzibar bombarded it in 1837, forcing its inhabitants to abandon the town and take refuge in the former Portuguese town of Gavana near Fort Jesus (below).

Portuguese period

In April 1498 Vasco da Gama landed in Mombasa; due to the hostile reception there, he departed for Malindi. This began bitter relations between Mombasa and the Portuguese, and led to multiple attacks waged on the city as noted above (Berg 1968: 45). After its defeat in 1589, the Portuguese established Mombasa as a base from which to control coastal trade, building Fort Jesus from 1593–1597 ([Figure 54.1](#)), after which they installed the Sheikh of Malindi as ruler there. During their occupation, the Portuguese built the walled settlement of Gavana (Strandes [1899] 1968). Recent urban development has destroyed most of this old Portuguese town, said to have consisted of one main street, La Raposeira or 'Foxhole' (now Ndia Kuu). A 1710 report refers to a second street, Rua do Padre Juliares (Strandes [1899] 1968: 240), which may be Mbarak Hinawy Road today.



[Figure 54.1](#) Fort Jesus, Mombasa

p.623

The arrival of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean resulted in two things; it led to the militarisation of the eastern African coast, and it spurred the decline of many Swahili settlements (Strandes [1899] 1968; Breen and Lane 2003). That militarisation is witnessed by both the many forts the Portuguese built along this coast (Pradines 2001), as well as the wrecks of Portuguese warships in coastal waters (Blake and Green 1986; Lynch 1991). One such wreck is the 42-gun Portuguese frigate *Santo Antonio de Tanna*, lost during the Arab siege of Fort Jesus in 1697–1698, and excavated by the Institute of Nautical Archaeology (INA) in the 1970s, discussed further below (Sassoon 1982b).

To establish their presence on the coast and protect their Indian Ocean economic interests, European and Middle Eastern powers relied on military force (Breen and Lane 2003; McConkey and McErlean 2007), including the construction of forts and other structures. Most notably, in 1593, the Portuguese began building Fort Jesus at the entrance

to Tudor Creek, to control their expansive Indian Ocean trade routes and protect the Old Port of Mombasa (Kirkman 1974).

To protect Kilindini harbour, the Portuguese also constructed three batteries at the entrance to the harbour; Fort Saint Joseph, the Horseshoe Fort ('Fortim da ponta restinga' on Portuguese maps), and the Round Fort, later called the Fort of the Anchorage (Sommer 2007). The Horseshoe Fort is located along Mama Ngina Drive and was designed to cover the shipping channel into Kilindini Harbour. The wall of this fort is indented with five cannon embrasures facing the sea (Sommer 2007). Fort of the Anchorage was destroyed during the twentieth century to make way for a coal wharf (Sassoon 1982a).

Three additional forts were built by the Portuguese in 1614 near Makupa Ford, to protect the island from raids carried out by 'Muzungullos', a mainland people (Strandes [1899] 1968; Boxer and Azevedo 1960; Freeman-Grenville 1962; see Ray, this volume).

Sixteenth-century accounts indicate the Portuguese may have built fortifications somewhere near Ras Serani, just outside Fort Jesus, although currently not visible (Strandes [1899] 1968; Freeman-Grenville 1962); at the same location, two small batteries may have been built by the Ottomans in the 1580s to guard the port entrance (Poumailloux 2000). In 1505, the Portuguese commander Francisco d'Almeida erected a white marble pillar with a cross at Ras Serani, known as the Padrão. According to João de Barros' account of d'Almeida's expedition, the Padrão was engraved like a 'headstone' on one side, depicting a child wearing a laurel crown, and on the other with a shield of hope (Gray 1947).

Mazrui period

In 1698, the Portuguese in Mombasa were defeated by the Omani Arabs, who exercised their own hegemony by occupying Fort Jesus and appointed a member of the Mazrui family as governor. The Omanis buttressed this occupation by adding Arab architectural styles to the bulwarks of the fort (Kirkman 1974). The Mazrui ruled Mombasa till 1837 when they were dethroned by Seyyid Said, then ruler of Zanzibar. During the Mazrui period, the former Portuguese town, Gavana, developed into a predominantly Muslim settlement. Population increased and additional work on the town wall was commissioned (Gray 1947: 20).

British colonialism and fortifications

Britain established its control over the Kenyan coastal region in 1895. During the Second

World War, Mombasa's Kilindini harbour became a front line of defence for British East Africa against attacks from the Germans, then controlling Tanganyika to the south. For Mombasa to play this role, the British army and navy built several defensive structures along the Mombasa coastline. Next to the Horseshoe Fort, for example, the army constructed two 6-pounder guns, an anti-aircraft light machine gun emplacement, pillbox, coastal artillery search light and generator bunker (Sommer 2007). Several structures were constructed around Fort St Joseph, including a battery behind the redoubt, a generator bunker, view towers and a searchlight structure.

p.624

The strategic importance of Mombasa also led to the British construction of a railway line beginning in 1895, one that would enable them to open up the interior of their East African protectorate to the outside world. This railway lives on, and has been instrumental, together with the port, in turning Mombasa into an important player in the international marketplace.

Mombasa maritime history

As mentioned above, since at least the twelfth century Mombasa has been one of the most strategic harbours and trading centres on the coast (Hoyle 2000). Excavations in various parts of town have recovered Sasanian Islamic pottery, indicating contacts with the Arabian Peninsula starting from the twelfth century (Sassoon 1980, 1982a; McConkey and McErlean 2007). Later imports include Chinese celadon as well as blue and white, some of which date to the Ming dynasty, consistent with other locations on the coast.

Recently, especially after the National Museums of Kenya (NMK) started an underwater unit within the coastal archaeology department, numerous underwater surveys have been carried out. They have unearthed significant maritime and underwater cultural heritage sites by Mombasa (Breen and Lane 2003; Patience 2006; Bitá and Wanyama 2011; Bitá 2015). The first excavation to be undertaken in the Mombasa waters, however, was that of the *Santa Antonio de Tanna*, the Portuguese frigate lost during the Arab siege of Fort Jesus in 1697–1698. The wreck lies close to the entrance to Tudor Creek on the north side of Mombasa Island, at 13–16 m depth (Piercy 1977). It was excavated in the 1970s by the Institute of Nautical Archaeology together with the NMK. Excavations recovered Indian wares, Chinese porcelain, Martaban and Portuguese jars, canons, mortar shells and bronze medallions (for example, Piercy 1977, 1981; Sassoon 1980; Bitá 2013; Blot 2015).

In recent decades, the area around the *Santa Antonio de Tanna* has been resurveyed, including in 2001 by the University of Ulster, British Institute in Eastern Africa and NMK. This work investigated the maritime landscape of Mombasa Island, emphasising the area of the Old Port (Breen *et al.* 2001; Breen and Lane 2003; McConkey and McErlean

2007; Quinn *et al.* 2007). This survey and another by the NMK revealed previously unidentified shipwrecks. These included two Portuguese single-masted galiots (*manchua*) possibly destroyed during the siege of Fort Jesus, one eighteenth-century European vessel and five nineteenth- and twentieth-century mercantile vessels (Sommer 2007). Remains of a former twentieth-century bridge across the creek were also located (for example, Breen *et al.* 2001; Breen and Lane 2003; Forsythe *et al.* 2003; McConkey and McErlean 2007; Quinn *et al.* 2007; Bitu 2009, 2011).

As part of a heritage impact assessment before the 2008 laying of a fibre optic cable, the NMK conducted an intertidal, geophysical and diving survey between the Tudor Channel and the entrance to the Old Port on the eastern side of Mombasa Island. This survey recovered, among other things, two stone anchors and one Indo-Arabian-type stone anchor (Bitu and Tripathi 2015), made of locally available shelly limestone; they resemble anchors found in Kilwa Kisiwani and Modagishu, but could date to anytime between the medieval and modern periods.

p.625

Architecture

The architecture of Mombasa Island reflects the montage of cultures and sub-cultures that have characterised the island. The suburb of Kizingo, for instance, resembles an English garden suburb, while the Old Town is a Swahili mosaic that includes local, Indian and Arab styles. The British brought the veranda to Mombasa; providing shelter from heat and rain, this style can be found both on the island as well as on the adjacent mainland of Mombasa (Sarmiento 2010; Steyn 2015).

Mombasa, the slave trade and a landscape of memory

Though Mombasa participated in slavery and the slave trade, little of its involvement has been acknowledged or written about; this is indeed an unfortunate trend in Kenya (Kiriamia 2009; see Marshall and Kiriamia, this volume). Yet there are vestiges of slavery and the slave trade all over Kenya. Although Fort Jesus was used to hold slaves at the height of the trade, for example, nothing about this function is ever discussed.

Vestiges of the slave trade include Freretown, founded in the late nineteenth century as a settlement for freed slaves. The British government came under intense pressure from missionaries and abolitionists to end slavery and the slave trade within its Empire and spheres of influence. As a result of these campaigns, the British Parliament passed laws between 1807 and 1832 that outlawed slavery and the slave trade. Britain persuaded the

Sultan of Zanzibar, Seyyid Said, to ratify various treaties between 1822 and 1845, by which the sultan pledged to prohibit and prevent the sale of captives to Europeans and allow the British Royal Navy to arrest slaving vessels plying the waters of the western Indian Ocean.

Even before these laws, however, from the early nineteenth century, the British Royal Navy was settling African people freed from slavery at several places, such as the Nasik Church Missionary Society mission station in Bombay, Aden in Yemen and the Seychelles. Many of those manumitted in Aden were sent to Bombay because it was a larger station and provided greater opportunities for employment (Harris 1971; Beachey 1976: 71; Kiriamu 2009; Kiriamu and Ballarin 2013). In 1873, however, Sir Bartle Frere, the British governor of Bombay and later President of the Royal Geographical Society, suggested that liberated people be settled nearer their original homes, to stimulate self-reliance and 'civilise' them through education (India, Secret Department, June 1873: 236–311; Harris 1971). Thus in 1873 Bartle was sent to Zanzibar to negotiate the end of slave trade with Sultan Seyyid Bargharsh, and on to Mombasa to locate a suitable place for a settlement (Frankl 1993; Kiriamu 2014).

In 1874, shortly after Frere's visit, Rev. William Salter Price, founder of the Nasik settlement in Bombay, established a settlement on the outskirts of Mombasa named IT Freretown, to be a centre for training teachers and missionaries for missions in East Africa. Freretown received its first residents that same year and by 1888 the population was over 3,000 (Beachey 1976). In 1874, the Nasik orphanage was closed and the African students were sent as missionaries to Mombasa; this group from Bombay came to be known as the 'Bombay Africans'. The mission station established a church, school and dormitories, and a plantation to supply the needs of the settlement. A cemetery in which each of the families were allocated a burial ground is still in use by Freretownians.

Soon after the opening of Freretown, a bell tower was built next to the mission's main office. Apart from summoning people for mass, it was used to warn people whenever a vessel suspected to harbour slave pirates was sighted. Upon hearing the bell chime, a roll call was carried out to confirm that no one had been captured. The bell also served as a clock; it was rung to wake up the Freretownians, inform them to take meals and signal beginning or ending of classes: part of the 'civilising' mission of the town (Aldrick 1993).

p.626

To the descendants of freed slaves, the Freretown settlement remains their home and heritage; St Emmanuel Church (completed in 1896), the bell tower and the cemetery are markers of their identity. As places significant to residents and their ancestors, they are depositories for individual and collective memories, symbolic arenas where residents go to gain a physical connection with the past.

Conclusion

The strategic position of Mombasa has enabled it to be an important trading centre on the coast for centuries and to play a central role in the international networks of the Indian Ocean. This in turn has contributed to its long and complex history, one that has seen Mombasa as the headquarters of waves of colonial governments. This history has seen terrestrial and maritime Mombasa turned into a 'memorialscape' – one that commemorates both good and bad in human nature. As shown above, there are vestiges there that celebrate numerous events, through which multiple histories of Mombasa are simultaneously remembered and forgotten (Macrone 1998; Winter 2005). For instance, while the people of Freretown see St Emmanuel church as the embodiment of their spirituality, Tuaca's population see Mbaraki Pillar as playing that role. Mombasa's residents find spiritual nourishment, restoration of their dignity, expression of identity, leadership and achievement, in these places. Even more importantly, the memorialscape of Mombasa has enabled its inhabitants to both place themselves in Mombasa's cultural and political landscape, and connect to elsewhere in eastern Africa, the western Indian Ocean, and the world.

References

- Abungu G. H. O. 1985. 'The history of Mombasa and its inhabitants'. Unpublished Papers, National Museums of Kenya, Fort Jesus Museum.
- Aldrick, J. 1993. 'The Freretown bell tower at Kengeleni'. *Coastweek*.
- Beachey, R. W. 1976. *The Slave Trade of Eastern Africa*. London: Rex Collings.
- Berg, F. J. 1968. 'The Swahili community of Mombasa 1500–1900'. *Journal of African History* 9 (1): 35–56.
- Berg, F. J. and Walter, B. J. 1968. 'Mosques, population and urban development in Mombasa'. *Hadith* 1: 47–99.
- Bitá, C. 2009. *The Intertidal and Foreshore Archaeology of Mombasa Island: An Inventory of Maritime Sites*. Survey Report, Fort Jesus Museum, Mombasa.
- Bitá, C. 2011. 'Cultural heritage impact assessment for the Lion 2 Undersea Fibre Optic Cable in Mombasa'. National Museums of Kenya.
- Bitá, C. 2013. 'Martaban jars found in Kenya'. *Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum Newsletter* 7 (1): 3.
- Bitá, C. 2015. 'The potentials of underwater archaeology in Kenya: a short communication'. In *Shipwrecks around the World: Revelations of the Past*, edited by S. Tripathi, 486–510. New Delhi: Delta Book World.
- Bitá, C. and Tripathi, S. 2015. 'Stone anchors from Mombasa, Kenya: evidence of maritime

contacts with Indian Ocean countries'. *Bulletin of the Australasian Institute of Maritime Archaeology* 39: 84–91.

- Bitu, C. and Wanyama, P. 2011. 'Archaeological impact assessment study report for the proposed capital dredging works at Kilindini channel and second container terminal at Port Reitz in Mombasa County, CHIA Report'. Mombasa: National Museums of Kenya.
- Blake, W. and Green, J. 1986. 'A mid-XVI century Portuguese wreck in the Seychelles'. *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 15: 1–23.
- Blot, J.-Y. 2015. 'Triangular identities: in search of *fragata Santo António de Tanna* (Vasai/Goa 1680, Mombasa 1697)'. In *Shipwrecks around the World: Revelations of the Past*, edited by S. Tripathi, 72–113. New Delhi: Delta Book House.

p.627

- Boxer, C. R. and de Azevedo, C. 1960. *Fort Jesus and the Portuguese in Mombasa, 1593–1729*. London: Hollis and Carter.
- Breen, C. P. and Lane, P. J. 2003. 'Archaeological approaches to East Africa's changing seascape'. *World Archaeology* 35: 469–89.
- Breen, C. P., Forsythe, W., Lane, P., McErlean, T., McConkey, R., Omar, A. L., *et al.* 2001. 'Ulster and the Indian Ocean? Recent maritime archaeological research on the East African coast'. *Antiquity* 75: 797–8.
- Cerulli, E., Gabrieli, F., Levi Della Vida, G., Petech, L., Tucci, G., *et al.* (Eds) 1970. *Al-Idrīsī: Opus geographicum*. Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli.
- Forsythe, W., Quinn, R. and Breen, C. 2003. 'Subtidal archaeological investigations in Mombasa's Old Port'. In *Researching Africa's Past: New Contributions from British Archaeologists*, edited by P. Mitchell, A. Haour and J. Hobart, 133–8. Oxford University School of Archaeology Monograph 57. Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Frankl, P. J. L. 1993. 'An Arabic deed of sale from Swahili Mombasa dated 1292/1875'. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 20 (1): 33–41.
- Freeman-Grenville, G. S. P. 1962. *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the First to the Earlier Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Gray, J. 1947. 'Rezende's description of East Africa in 1634'. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 23: 2–29.
- Harris, J. E. 1971. *The African Presence in Asia: Consequences of the East African Slave Trade*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Helm, R. 2000. 'Conflicting histories: the archaeology of iron-working, farming communities in the central and southern coast region of Kenya'. PhD diss., University of Bristol.
- Horton, M. C. and Middleton, J. 2000. *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.

- Hourani, G. F. 1995. *Arab Seafaring*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hoyle, B. 2000. 'Global and local forces in developing countries'. *Journal for Maritime Research*, February, 1–17.
- India. Secret Department. June 1873: 236–311.
- Kiriama, H. O. 1987. 'Archaeo-metallurgy of iron-smelting slags from a Mwituu Tradition Site in Kenya'. *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 42: 125–30.
- Kiriama, H. O. 2009. 'Memory and heritage: Shimoni slave caves in southern Kenya'. PhD diss., Deakin University.
- Kiriama, H. O. 2014. 'Mombasa slave heritage and the making of the western Indian Ocean: the case of Frere Town Freed Slave Settlement, Mombasa'. In *Entretiens du Patrimoine de l'océan Indien, Saint Denis La Réunion*, edited by A. Cheyssial, 241–8. Montpellier.
- Kiriama, H. O. and Ballarin, M. P. 2013. "'La 43^e tribu": héritage de l'esclavage dans la région de Mombasa (Frere Town) au Kenya'. In *Traites des Esclaves et Esclavages en Afrique Orientale et dans l'Océan Indien*, edited by H. Medard, M. L. Derat, T. Vernet and M. P. Ballarin, 317–37. Paris: Karthala.
- Kirkman, J. S. 1974. *Fort Jesus: A Portuguese Fort on the East African Coast*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Lynch, M. (Ed.) 1991. 'The Mombasa wreck excavation'. *Institute of Nautical Archaeology Newsletter* 18 (2): 2–29.
- Macrone, D. 1998. *The Sociology of Nationalism*. London, Routledge.
- Matthew, G. 1963. 'The East African coast until the coming of Portuguese'. In *History of East Africa*, edited by R. Oliver and G. Matthew, 94–128. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- McConkey, R. and McErlean, T. 2007. 'Mombasa Island: a maritime perspective'. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 11 (2): 99–121.
- Middleton, J. 1992. *The World of Swahili: An African Mercantile Civilization*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Nurse, D. and Spear, T. 1985. *The Swahili: Reconstructing the History and Language of an African Society, 800–1500*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania.
- Omi, G. 1982. 'Survey on Palaeolithic site of Mtongwe Kenya in 1980'. In *Mtongwe 1980: Seventh Preliminary Report of African Studies*, edited by G. Omi, 3–8. Chikusa: Association for African Studies, Nagoya University.
- Omi, G., Ehara, A., Kato, Y. and Kawagoe, T. 1984. 'Characteristics and assemblages of Palaeolithic artifacts from Mtongwe site, Mombasa, Kenya'. In *Mtongwe 1982*, edited by G. Omi, 21–120. Matsumoto: Shinshu University.
- Patience, K. 2006. *Shipwrecks and Salvage on the East African Coast*. Bahrain: Dar Akhbar Al Khaleej.

- Piercy, R. C. M. 1977. 'Mombasa wreck excavation, preliminary report'. *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 6: 331–47.
- Piercy, R. C. M. 1981. 'Mombasa wreck excavation, fourth preliminary report, 1980'. *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 10: 109–18.
- Pradines, S. 2001. 'Fortifications et urbanisation Swahili: l'exemple de la cité de Gedi (Kenya)'. PhD diss., Université de la Sorbonne – Paris IV.
- Prins, A. H. J. 1967. *The Swahili-Speaking Peoples of Zanzibar and the East African Coast*. London: International African Institute.
- Poumailloux, P. 2000. 'Du Jarric's account of Thomas de Sousa Coutinho's expedition against Ali Bey in 1589'. *Azania* 35: 123–45.
- Quinn, R., Forsythe, W., Breen, C., Boland, D., Lane, P. and Omar, A. L. 2007. 'Process-based models for port evolution and wreck formation at Mombasa, Kenya'. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 34: 1449–60.
- Sarmiento, J. 2010. 'Fort Jesus: guiding the past and contesting the present in Kenya'. *Tourism Geographies* 12 (2): 246–63, doi:10.1080/14616681003725185.
- Sassoon, H. 1980. 'Excavations at the site of early Mombasa'. *Azania* 15: 1–42.
- Sassoon, H. 1982a. 'The mosque and pillar at Mbaraki: a contribution to the history of Mombasa'. *Azania* 17: 79–97.
- Sassoon, H. 1982b. 'The sinking of the *Santo Antonio de Tanna* in Mombasa harbour'. *Paideuma* 28: 101–8.
- Sommer, H. M. 2007. 'Portuguese shipwrecks off the Kenyan coast'. Unpublished report prepared for the Coastal Archaeology Unit, Fort Jesus Museum, Mombasa. National Museums of Kenya.
- Soper, R. 1967. 'Iron age sites in northeastern Tanzania'. *Azania* 2: 19–36.
- Steyn, G. 2015. 'The impacts of islandness on the urbanism and architecture of Mombasa'. *Urban Island Studies* 1: 55–80.
- Strandes, J. [1899] 1968. *The Portuguese Period in East Africa*, edited and annotated by J. Kirkman (2nd Ed.). Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau.
- Were, G., Derek, A. W. and Parsons, D. J. 1984. *East Africa through a Thousand Years*. Nairobi: Evans Brothers Ltd.
- Winter, J. 1995. *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*. Harvard: Cambridge University Press.

55

THE SWAHILI HOUSE

A Historical Ethnography of Modernity

Prita Meier

On the Swahili coast of eastern Africa, from about the thirteenth century until the late nineteenth century, powerful families patronised the construction of stately houses and mansions. The forms of this elite architecture changed over the centuries, but it was always built of local coral limestone. By at least the fifteenth century a white lime plaster covered the exterior surfaces of stone mansions and houses, which reflected the light of the sun, endowing their facades with a luminous quality. While many of the grandest stone structures are now ruins, their edifices still mark the coastal headlands of present-day Kenya and Tanzania. Their layout and ornament varied from town to town and from era to era, but their materiality, the weighty mass of coral stone, mediated human experience on the Swahili coast in fundamental ways for centuries. The iconic form of built stone animated people's claims to the local landscape, transforming the natural environment into political and cultural territory in a particularly dramatic manner. Yet, although the abundant material remains of stone architecture have allowed scholars to gain important insights about its forms and developments, about how it relates to other African architectural traditions, and about its relationship to the larger built and natural environment of the coast, its *meaning* is far more opaque. How did it relate to social, political and cultural practice? What was it a sign, icon and agent of? What kinds of worldviews did a stone house embody? The answers to these questions have remained speculative. After all, the material world, especially if no longer inhabited or in use, is a silent sentinel, whose original meaning can only be grasped as fragments and (mis-) translations. The fragmentary nature of this knowledge is in no way a weakness, but a rather a productive reminder of the fluidity of things. Certainly, Swahili accounts of the symbolic significance of stone mansions collected in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have provided compelling insights. But, like all history, these accounts are very much about the time in which the story is being told. This is even more so in the case

when a historical account is about the material heritage of the past. In fact, scholars are always challenged by the materiality of material culture, that it is itself not discursive and does not simply 'stand for' unchanging meanings. That is why careful analysis of physical context and the relationship between different objects, spaces and environments is such an important method in the related fields of art history and archaeology.

Despite these interpretive challenges, it is clear that stone architecture occupied an important role in local people's narratives about the civilisational order of their world for a long time. But, rather than assume its meaning is constituted by continuity and the endurance of ancient traditions, I emphasise that much of the ethnographic data about stone architecture's signification was collected during the modern era, a time of great sociopolitical change and crisis. What, then, if we do not assume little has changed in the meaning of stone architecture over the last five centuries? Indeed this chapter embraces a different horizon of expectations. I argue that the nineteenth century marks a major watershed moment, when modernisation and colonisation changed a range of pre-existing systems and traditions. I chart this process, showing how built form was submitted to a modern taxonomic logic. What becomes clear is that the revolutionary circumstances of the modern period forced locals to reconstitute how they made their sense of place useful to themselves and legible to others in the world. From this vantage point extant narratives about stone architecture are a critical mode of commentary about recent social and cultural politics taking place in postcolonial nation-states. Thus, while I give a brief overview of some of the distinguishing physical characteristics of stone houses, I emphasise their refabulation over the last two hundred years. In a sense, then, this chapter focuses on the mobility of built form. Indeed, stories about Swahili coast stonework are constituted by rupture, revolution and reinvention as much as they are about permanence.

p.630

Swahili coast architecture meets modernity

The house – and the built environment more generally – is a matrix of constantly changing ideas and new experiences. Although social scientists tend to see domestic structures as representing or even shaping society, individual homes are just that – individual – and deeply embedded in personal and familial histories. But today, precisely because houses – the material fabric of daily life – are so intimately connected to the notion of habitus in the modern imaginary, all kinds of overarching societal characteristics have been ascribed to them (Cupers 2014). It has become accepted, even self-evident, to see a link between the characteristics of people, geography and the physical form of housing.

This way of seeing the world has its roots in the nineteenth century, when

industrialisation, nation building and imperialism had a major impact on people's relationship to the built and natural environment (Mitchell 1988). This was especially the case in societies connected to each other through the global networks of capitalist modernity and a whole range of geopolitical shifts transformed people's sense of self and community. In this watershed moment, houses – and by extension the people inhabiting them – took on increasingly ideologically charged roles in civilisational narratives. Questions about how people dwell, and the material form of dwellings, connected to issues of social hierarchy and citizenship all across the globe. For example, German nationalists came to embrace vernacular or folk architecture as signs of the primordial connection between Germanic 'races' and the physical territory of the new nation-state of Germany. For example, Alpine farmhouses represented 'the Bavarian', one of Germany's modern autochthons. By the 1920s Germans happily incorporated neo-Alpine ornament and dress into their daily life, which in turn figured prominently in the *Blut und Boden* (blood and soil) spectacles of the National Socialist regime.

Permutations of this kind of racialised historicism have had a far-reaching impact on the study, reception and even design of housing all over the world. In the colonial context such concepts intersected with local hierarchies and pre-colonial categories of identity, prompting new systems of signification and policies of political representation. And today colonial-era processes of racialisation continue to animate people's claims to territory and social identity in a myriad of ways in many postcolonial societies. This is no more evident than on the Swahili coast of eastern Africa (Fair 2001; Glassman 1995, 2011; Bissell 2011). Here material typologies and visual representations of 'the Swahili people' have played a particularly important role because of the intensely heterogeneous character of coastal society (Prestholt 2008; Meier 2016). Especially in the diasporic milieu of Swahili port cities, where most residents had, and continue to have, relatives from diverse places in Africa and Asia, assigning the materiality of daily life, including artefacts and architecture, to a specific racial or ethnic category became useful strategy to 'hold onto' people in the form of visual and textual evidence during the colonial period. As the colonial project progressed, Europeans, in an attempt to master space and people, sought to segregate and police the complex heterogeneity of Swahili urban life by instituting a hierarchy of architecture based on racial and evolutionary models. According to this schema Africans build and live in perishable or semipermanent 'huts', and only 'higher races', such as 'Arabs', create permanent stone architecture (Bissell 2011: 61–4; Glassman 1995: 34; Meier 2016: 39–64). These assumptions racialised the cultural prestige associated with stone architecture, and its historically variable form became typed as 'Arab' or 'Persian' and later, during the postcolonial period, as 'Swahili'. In reality people, ideas and worldviews have been mixed up for a very long time on the Swahili coast, which means that local culture can never be reduced to a story about ethnicity or ethno-territorial belonging. That is not to say that architecture and its attendant visual culture did not play an important role in how people expressed their identities, but the prevailing view that the permanent stone houses of the Swahili coast embody a Swahili identity is not an ancient phenomenon, but a

chronotope of modernity. In fact, historians and anthropologists who focus on the Swahili coast have provided a nuanced picture of how Swahili ethnic identity is a modern racialised category (Willis 1993; McIntosh 2009; Brennan 2012; Prestholdt, 2014).

p.631

An overview of coral stone domestic architecture

Archaeological research suggests that coral masonry work became increasingly important in the construction of domestic architecture sometime between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. At this time local architects focused on developing building technologies that exploited the unique qualities of coral stone. This period also coincided with the coast becoming a central node in the global *umma*, or the worldwide community of Muslims. While timber mosques have been built on the coast since perhaps the eighth century (Horton 1996), Islam and stone architecture became linked in the local imaginary at some point. In fact, many accounts of Swahili coast civilisation begin with stories of stone: once local people gained the knowledge to shape coral into architecture, wild nature was also transformed into culture. Apocryphal accounts collected in the nineteenth century connect the beginning of Islam on the Swahili coast with stone architecture. For example, Mombasan origin stories recount how the first Muslim leader of Mombasa, Shehe Mvita, constructed the first stone mosque on Mombasa Island when three mysterious men from ‘the North’ gave him lime mortar, the binding agent that makes coral stone masonry possible (Meier 2016: 66).

Coral, abundantly available since it is the bedrock of much of the coast, was transformed into a range of building materials and architectural embellishments. For example, the production of fine and lustrous coral and shell plaster was one of the hallmarks of Swahili coast architecture. Lime plaster protected walls and roofs from weathering and it endowed stone structures with a shimmering whiteness that could be seen from great distances. Both living (*Porites*) and dry coral was used in the construction process. *Porites* coral was cut from living reefs into large blocks for structural elements, such as load-bearing pillars. Dry coral rag and other organic materials were also mixed with coral lime, which functioned as a binding agent, to build walls. *Porites* coral was carved and incised to create elaborate doorway, niche, wall and window decorations. For example, sometime in the eighteenth century it became fashionable in the towns of the Lamu Archipelago to cover the entire surfaces of walls with low-relief geometric and floriated decorations and with rows upon rows of miniature niches ([Figure 55.1](#)).

p.632



[*Figure 55.1*](#) Zidaka from ruined house in Pate, probably eighteenth century

Domestic architecture could take extremely elaborate and complex forms. For example, the palaces at Kilwa Kisiwani and Songo Mnara featured grand domes, arches and barrel vaults (Garlake 1966). Yet the majority of stone houses were rectangular flat-roofed structures, with roof beams constructed of hardwood timber. Some of these structures reached up to four stories. Throughout most of their history, their plan and exterior facade were geared towards preserving the privacy of family members living within the house. Solid walls with small windows faced the streets and access to different sections of the house was graduated and carefully controlled. By the early nineteenth century, when the Busaidi dynasty of Oman came to dominate the region, Arabian Peninsula palace architecture became prevalent on to the coast. The Omani colonial elite often built multi-storey palaces with one central inner courtyard – a form typical in the Middle East. Architectural ornament deriving from the Arabian Peninsula also became popular all along the coast. For example, by the 1870s the merchant structures of Zanzibar’s waterfront all

featured crenellated parapets. These rooftop rows of pointed merlons mirror the defensive architecture of desert forts in inland Oman, but on the Swahili coast they are purely decorative, their original function as battlements long forgotten or even unknown.

p.633

Throughout much of its history the architecture of the wealthy merchant and landowning classes was in dialogue with the architecture of places overseas, such as the houses built in the littoral cities of the Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea and Red Sea (Garlake 1966; Lewcock 1976). But this can only be said of its 'look': the visual qualities of elite architecture were very much about creating a dialogue with other Islamic port cities. Its construction technology was in many ways an extension of mainland African practices, although structural elements, such as domes and barrel vaulting, clearly connect Swahili coast architecture to the Persian Gulf area and South Asian building traditions. It was not the case, however, as British archaeologists assumed during the colonial period, that Arab or Persian colonisers brought stone architecture and urban civilisation to the Swahili coast (Allen 1993; Abungu and Mutoro 1993; Chami 1994; Horton 1996; Kusimba 1999). Locals – who of course also had overseas connections and relations – developed and maintained the Swahili coast built environment. Most importantly, even when a house was made to look like a house across the Indian Ocean it structured local experiences. In fact, cultivating a cultural environment that was about bringing 'the elsewhere' home was important to local practice. It would be best, then, to describe all coastal east African houses as stylistic and spatial entanglements, where diverse forms and histories interlock and overlap to create densely layered structures that cannot be broken down into distinct stylistic parts.

Historically, most stone houses likely belonged to well-to-do patricians, who carried the title *waungwana* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Their social privileges had a lot to do with family pedigree and descent, but their wealth depended on managing or participating in the long-distance trading networks that connected Africa and Asia. Such families therefore played a key role in the mercantile economy of the coast and their houses probably also served as conduits of trade and transcultural negotiation (LaViolette 2008: 37–8). Significantly, archaeologists who have excavated the ruins of stone mansions have recovered a whole range of maritime objects of trade, in glazed ceramics, jewellery, glassware, beads, metals and other luxury items (for example, Chittick 1974).

Beginning in the 1970s Westerners began to collect oral histories and stories about the symbolic significance of stone mansions. Most scholars focused on the grand stone mansions of the Lamu Archipelago, and most interviewed the descendants of once-powerful *waungwana* families – those families that once built and lived in the most lavish stone mansions. Especially important in this regard is the pioneering work of James de Vere Allen (1979), whose work continues to influence the study of Swahili coast culture to this day. He was the first scholar who presented stone architecture as a representation of

the longevity of the *waungwana* moral order (Allen 1979). Linda Donley-Reid, who worked closely with de Vere Allen, argued that the stone mansion was the most important space for the performance of elite social identities and gender roles. In her elegant phrasing, it was the ‘structuring structure’ of *waungwana* civilisational order (Donley-Reid 1990). Their work, shaped by the structuralist anthropology of the 1970s, has been especially popular because it allows one to imagine the meaning of stone architecture has not changed much over the centuries.

Making architecture about identity

To this day questions about whether Swahili coast cities – and by extension their peoples – are ‘African’ and ‘native’ or somehow ‘foreign’ shape discussions about local heritage. Even Kenyans and Tanzanians are concerned with the essential ethnic identity of the built environment, posing questions like ‘Is this architecture really Kenyan?’ or ‘Are the Swahili Africans or Arabs?’ The work of scholars and activists who came of age during independence has already shown us that if we must choose between these two categories, then the culture of the east African littoral is unquestionably African. Yet the very notion that it makes sense to use racialised geopolitical and ethnic labels to think about material culture became operative very recently, during the colonial period.

p.634

Today, the very notion that the diverse stone structures dotting the coastal headlands of eastern Africa ‘stand for’ the Swahili people has become so naturalised that it is difficult to historicise this mode of seeing the built landscape and its attendant artefacts of living. Now scholars and heritage institutions, like museums, celebrate the pre-colonial structures built from local timber and coral and lime as iconic symbols of Swahili identity. Until the 1980s scholars tended to see this architecture in rather sentimental terms, as signs of the refinement, morality and good taste of the Swahili elite. Linda Donley-Reid’s vision of the Lamu stone house being the ‘structuring structure’ of the Swahili patrician way of life has been especially powerful in this regard (Donley-Reid 1990; see also Allen 1979). Although Donley-Reid’s work is now criticised for its ahistorical and Arabo-centric vision of Swahili coast civilisation (Fleisher 2015), the production of corporate identity and how architecture either reflects or creates identity remains one of the dominant themes of scholarship on Swahili coast material culture.

Of course, living in a close-knit neighbourhood in Mombasa or Zanzibar, or growing up in one’s ancestral home in Lamu might indeed encourage one to nurture a sense of group belonging, but the idea that the architecture somehow reflects or produces this belonging is really a vague generalisation that could be said of many places, across many time periods. The study of material culture as a form of identity negotiation can easily

become a straightjacket, reproducing the same answers to the same questions and ultimately limiting our understanding of the complexity of the past. After all, as Frederick Cooper reminds us:

the language of identity disposes us to think in terms of bounded groupness. It does so because even constructivist thinking on identity takes the existence of identity as axiomatic. Identity is always already “there,” as something individuals and groups “have,” even if the content of particular identities, and the boundaries that mark them off from one another, are conceptualized as always in flux.

(Cooper 2005: 83.)

Indeed, Africanist conceptions of culture are often still undergirded by the assumption that each ethnicity produced singular cultural traditions that can be traced back to a specific place on the African continent, where the putative ethnic group originated. Even important studies of encounters between different societies inadvertently present material artefacts, such as architecture, in racialised terms such as ‘hybridity’, which, as Robert Young has shown, is a biological concept describing organic processes that was grafted onto the study of culture during the colonial encounter (Young 1995). In critical theory hybridity has also gained valence, but it is largely used to describe symbolic acts of subversion and improvisation and is not linked to groupness. In the study of the material culture of Africa, however, its ethnic roots constitute the term because here ‘hybrid cultural patterns’ are framed as encounters between different ethnicities, or ‘peoples’. Further, and perhaps most significantly, studying culture in terms of identity formation can be reductive. After all, as the anthropologist Michael Jackson reminds us, peoples’ creativity, their imagination and their material lives are not simply representations of collectivities, social processes or communal beliefs (Jackson 2013: 3–4). They might, in part, speak to such social science themes, but they do much more.

p.635

The watershed moment

It was during the nineteenth century, when old elite families of stone towns lost their status and autonomy, that the stone architecture of the coast began gradually to demarcate a new politics of exclusion, based on concepts of racial difference. Although, as historian Jonathon Glassman (2011) reminds us, we must be sceptical of the popular idea that the racialisation of social life on the Swahili coast happened only because of British colonisation. Other phenomena certainly had an impact. For example, the intensification of plantation slavery for the production of cash crops, such as cloves, in the 1810s reshaped how people related to each other in fundamental ways (Cooper 1977; Glassman 1995: 96–114; Fair 2001: 28–55; Prestholdt 2008: 118–46). The unparalleled scale of enslavement and the dehumanising cruelty of plantation slavery forever changed how people understood the long connections between coastal and mainland Africans. The lives

of the enslaved also became about being different in the eyes of enslavers, especially since the plantation system depended on creating clearer boundaries between the free and unfree (Marshall and Kiriamo, this volume). What is important to emphasise here is that status and identity were not expressed in terms of race and ethnicity. Instead, social identities were articulated by creating oppositional civilisational categories, such as *uchenzi* ('coarse') versus *ungwana* (cultured). Of course, by the early twentieth century these concepts did indeed become racialised, but in the revolutionary time of the nineteenth century categories of culture, community and selfhood worked differently than they did only a hundred years or so later.

Historical data suggest that before colonial governance took hold, the intensification of caravan trade during the early nineteenth century also led to complex processes of intercultural contact between the communities of Unyamwezi, Lake Tanganyika and the Swahili coast (Rockel 2006). In fact, Swahili coast urban centres had much in common with upcountry towns like Ujiji and Tabora because of the constant back and forth movements of people and commodities between the coast and these caravan towns (Rockel forthcoming). People all across central Africa became interested in consuming the cultural codes of Zanzibar since it was perceived to be the centre of a sophistication and cosmopolitan mobility. Cultural exchanges also flowed both ways, although symbols of high status and mercantile power were often seen as coming from the coast. In terms of expressive culture, however, upcountry traditions had a major impact on the coast. For example, Manyema conceptions of beauty and aesthetics reshaped cities like Zanzibar in terms of fashion, music and dance (McCurdy 2006).

In fact, it seems that peoples living around the Great Lakes did not perceive calling themselves 'Shirazi' or '*waungwana*,' dressing in a *kofia* and *kanzu*, and speaking Swahili as something that they had 'appropriated' from coastal cities. Rather, these practices reflected the emergence of rapidly changing transcontinental social order. For example, Africans living around Ujiji and Tabora called themselves *waungwana* because they wanted to signal that they had the means and authority to move freely – or at least with partial autonomy – along the caravan routes to conduct business anywhere they wanted, including on the Swahili coast (Glassman 1995: 62). They saw themselves as self-realised individuals, who earned wages, could speak Swahili fluently and eloquently and dressed like sophisticated gentlemen and gentlewomen (Rockel 2006). Few probably knew that a select group of families on the Swahili coast saw it as their exclusive prerogative to be called *waungwana* and Shirazi.

The architecture of the mid-nineteenth century of eastern Africa was also shaped by these political, economic and cultural dynamics. The architecture of the Swahili was in fact part of the travelling culture that connected coast and interior African culture. During this period Tabora and Ujiji residents, especially powerful trading families, built the kind of white-washed merchant houses that now are celebrated as being typically Swahili. Of course, many of these wealthy traders had migrated from the coast, but they did not belong

to a single ethnicity, nor were they necessarily from coastal patrician families. The majority were self-made men and women, such as Tippu Tip, and they included Arabs, Baluchis, South Asians, their former pawns, bondmen or slaves, or the children of 'mixed' parentage, and even Europeans. The white-washed merchants' houses associated with the heyday of global trade on the Swahili coast were in fact settings for family life that was very 'multi-ethnic' and 'multi-cultural'.

p.636

Whether located in Tabora or Zanzibar, the coral-built house was associated with mercantile power, wealth, Muslim mores and freedom in the nineteenth century. One did not only inherit such monuments as emblems of one's family patrician heritage, but one could simply buy, rent and expropriate them. In fact, travellers' accounts from the late nineteenth century mention that formerly bonded mainland Africans sometimes bought stone houses in 'stone towns' such as Bagamoyo, when they themselves became wealthy merchants (Schmidt 1888). To claim ownership of a house associated with cosmopolitan privilege and wealth was and continues to be primarily about being seen as an autonomous person. Many deployed such aesthetic performances for strategic reasons: it was a way to gain recognition in the eyes of others; one became visible through such material acts. Using architecture and ornament to make others see one in new ways was by no means easy or uncontested. In the competitive world of nineteenth-century Zanzibar, for example, the adornment of homes and bodies was intensely scrutinised since so many newcomers arrived daily to make claims of belonging to the culture of the port. Being able to build and fashion spaces of mercantile plenitude was always central to Swahili coast aesthetic practice, but it was increasingly accompanied by the risk that it could be devalued as an act of audacious self-invention or, worse, as an act of tasteless pretension. Yet this was a risk many were willing to take. In the nineteenth century such newly ornamented houses were signs of modernity and social mobility, but today these structures are associated with the ways of the 'ancients' or the traditions of the precolonial period. No matter how old or new, the merchant house encapsulates a 'cosmopolitan' utopian ideal. To be truly cultured means one has the power to create networks of affinity across great distances – like the great merchant families of the past.

Architectures of contested meanings

When one speaks of Swahili houses to coastal residents today, two different, but interconnected, building technologies and social worlds are evoked. In fact, for the majority of people living in coastal towns such as Mombasa, Zanzibar or Lamu 'the Swahili house' is a single-story domestic structure that features a porch or *baraza* benches on its main façade. Such structures are often called 'makuti houses' after the palm leaves that are sometimes used for the roofs. Such houses were once constructed from coral rag,

palm and mangrove wood, and other earthen materials, although nowadays corrugated iron and cement blocks are used. Others conjure the elegant multi-storey white-washed mansions that still dominate the cityscape of Lamu as the classic Swahili house. It does indeed matter if the speaker considers one or the other more 'Swahili'. The latter foregrounds the importance of patricians and overseas settlers to the making of Swahili coast culture. In contrast, the makuti house evokes a more interstitial cultural affiliation. It is seen as distinct from mainland African housing cultures and, like the stone mansion, it also represents overseas connections, albeit very ancient ones. Today the makuti house is a 'native' sign and claims to indigeneity are anchored in its form. In contrast, many who own old stone mansions see them as the cultural opposite of the makuti house. While in reality stone and earthen structures intermingle (Sheriff 2001), and are part of the same spectrum of building technology, conceptually stone is linked to the sea and earthen houses to mainland Africa. That is certainly the opinion of elders living in Mombasa Old Town who are part of the Thenashara Taifa, the oldest polity on Mombasa Island (Meier 2016: 39). For others, the makuti house is just as permanent and civilised as the gleaming mansions of the elite. These myriad opinions reflect differences in people's family histories and the contours of contemporary identity politics in postcolonial east Africa.

p.637

Today all *wamiji* (people of the city) living in Old Town Mombasa present their urban fabric as an icon of cosmopolitan sophistication and material permanence. In the early 2000s *wamiji* elders used evocative terminology to discuss Swahili port cities. One elder compared them to a string of luminous pearls, gleaming façades of stone houses, tombs and mosques announcing the civilisational order of the Swahili coast from great distances. Stone is significant to Swahili coast residents because it embodies the desire to claim belonging to the civilisational order of urban Islam. Building recognisably 'Islamic' cities gives material form to that claim. In the local imaginary stone architecture is essential to creating an Islamic sense of place. This emphasis on stone architecture constitutes a Swahili understanding of the cultural order of Islam. Muslims throughout history have often viewed Islam as a practice linked to urban life, but these ideals are not always predicated on the permanence of stone. Yet, as archaeological research has made abundantly clear, stone architecture has always represented just a small fragment of the local built environment. The notion that Swahili cities are 'stone towns' must be understood as an ideological tactic or utopian imaginary, rather than the 'real' nature of urban space (Gensheimer, Bissell, this volume).

The emphasis placed by local people on connecting their architecture to other centres of Islam across the sea has often been misunderstood as a denial to acknowledge or embrace their Africanity. But this notion represents a fundamental misunderstanding of Swahili coast conceptions of local culture. Certainly, local people coveted, and continue to covet, associations with distant places. Marriages with Muslim families from the Middle East also brought great social prestige and strengthened alliances with overseas centres of Islam. It is

also true that many believe their ancestors came from Shiraz (a city in present-day Iran), but I would argue they do because Shiraz exists largely as a symbolic image of distance. Unlike Arabs, Shirazis never came in large numbers to the coast, and therefore they did not represent a direct threat to the independence of local polities. In fact, it has been suggested that claims to Shirazi ancestry are not corroborated by historical evidence; instead coastal patricians created these stories because of 'the prestige foreign origins so often bring' in littoral societies (Spear 1984: 300). As a faraway place with little direct impact on the coast, Shiraz worked as an interstitial imaginary for people living on the Swahili coast.

Now it is a postmodernist truism that social and cultural identities are constructed imaginaries. In many ways contemporary Swahili cultural and ethnic identity is just as situational and fabricated as any other modern ethnic category or national identity. Swahili coast narratives of belonging are not only constructed or situational, however. Rather, they represent a heightened awareness of the potential malleability and translatability of all notions of self and belonging, shaped by the mercurial character of coastal life. For example, the ability to move between and inhabit multiple locales and worldviews lies at the heart of a Mombasan's sense of place. Code-switching and multilingualism are essential, but newcomers or outsiders are also always reminded by long-term residents that they are not in command of the city's multiplicity.

But stone architecture not only embodies various cosmopolitan imaginaries. In coastal Kenya, the austere and imposing walls are also linked to real histories of brutality. In fact stone architecture is connected to the coast's most contested and unresolved questions: who enslaved whom in the nineteenth century, and who colluded with colonialists? Because the most powerful enslavers and beneficiaries of slavery also claimed the Swahili culture of stone as their own, from a mainland or non-elite perspective stone mansions memorialise the unfolding of modern slavery in the nineteenth century.¹ The financiers and owners of plantations also built the largest stone structures ever seen on the Swahili coast. Today many are abandoned ruins, their crumbling edifices often defining the landscape. Populist histories describe how the patrons of these structures sacrificed and entombed countless enslaved Africans within the walls of their mansions before the abolition of slavery in Zanzibar in 1897 and on the Kenyan coast in 1907. Many locals today remember histories told by their parents and grandparents about the inhumane cruelty of those who built and owned the most imposing mansions and palaces of the coast. While one might question if people were really entombed in stone walls, Luise White's masterly analysis of rumour has shown us that it is precisely such shared stories that give us insight into how non-elites experienced the violence and upheavals of empire building in Africa (White 2000). Indeed, no physical evidence has yet been collected suggesting that people were entombed in walls, but such stories function as allegorical scaffolding for very real experiences of suffering. Stone therefore acts as an important witness on the Swahili coast. Disallowing erasure and forgetting, it stands as a permanent

sentinel of truth, especially since the descendants of plantation owners often deny the horrors of plantation slavery. Thus the very same structures celebrated by some as monuments of a great civilisation are seen by others as evidence that the elite once built their wealth on the bodies of the enslaved.²

p.638

Racing stone

From the 1890s onward, the meaning of permanent masonry work was increasingly submitted to the logic of empire and nation building. The ability of local stone architecture to mirror the elsewhere in myriad ways is exactly what made it so amenable to reinterpretation. Because it looked vaguely familiar to newly arrived Arabs and Europeans it became the object of keen scrutiny beginning in the nineteenth century. Newcomers first came to covet these structures simply because they also seemed to reflect the civilisational codes of Europe and other urban places in ‘civilised’ Asia. Zanzibar, Mombasa and even the more remote Lamu hosted an ever-growing influx of immigrants from the 1850s onward. Would-be colonialists, businesspeople, migrant workers and missionaries – among many others – all wanted to make a new life for themselves in these thriving coastal towns. Mombasa and Zanzibar especially saw their populations expand dramatically in the nineteenth century. South Asian financiers came to Zanzibar on the invitation of the sultan because he needed them to connect Zanzibar to the currency markets of Bombay. European and North American merchants, especially from Salem, Massachusetts, and the port cities of present-day Germany, established permanent offices in Zanzibar and Mombasa for the first time. The Hamburg company O’Swald and Co. was particularly successful in procuring favourable trade agreements from Seyyid Majid al Busaidi in the 1840s. William O’Swald and his Zanzibari employees oversaw a complex triangulation of trade between western and eastern Africa and the North Atlantic world, and he became incredibly wealthy during his tenure as the chief agent of his family’s company in Zanzibar. Like all European merchants, he wanted to live and work in a stone merchant house on the edge of the sea. O’Swald rented two stone mansions from the Busaidi family. While German merchants were already living in local stone houses in Zanzibar by the 1840s, by the 1880s South Asians, Europeans, North Americans and Arabs from all over the world rented or owned the best houses on the waterfront in Lamu and Mombasa as well.

p.639

As European intervention in the area became more intense and more about the politics of empire, the architecture of the waterfront was also annexed into European systems of signification. British colonial urban planning schemes, archaeological research,

resettlement programmes and taxation policies all had an impact in remapping the meaning of the Swahili coast built environment. Stone architecture was forced to correlate with new racial taxonomies, and Europeans attributed its origin to some distant Arab coloniser, effectively delegitimising local claims to this architecture and the way of life associated with it. The transoceanic character of these structures was therefore used to exclude local communities from a significant part of their heritage. It is tragically ironic that the ability of locals to build spaces that mirror the built environment of other port cities also led to marginalisation in their own cities.

Conclusion

Swahili coast people continue to face various forms of marginalisation. Today they have to reconcile precolonial ways of articulating cultural distinctiveness with colonial and postcolonial strategies for managing subjecthood and citizenship, which present culture, including architecture, as an expression of distinct ethnicities bound to a specific territory. For example, residents of Old Town Mombasa who position themselves as the descendants of the precolonial patrician elite (the *waungwana*) now articulate a sense of household and home that is a complex interpolation of precolonial, colonial and postcolonial systems of signification. Few *waungwana* descendants live in merchant houses on the waterfront since they lost ownership over them, but it is still important to see oneself connected to the *culture* of living in stone architecture. Objects and ornaments, such as a *kiti cha enzi* or a porcelain dish, now evoke the civilisational rhetoric of stone. Also, seemingly paradoxically, while contemporary Swahilis are aware that it is pivotal to claim indigeneness or else risk marginalisation within the nation-state, many still proudly declare, ‘Our houses are like those in Arabia’. Such a declaration resurrects precolonial idealisations of the port city as a space connected to the wider Muslim world, but because ‘Arabia’ now demarcates a refusal to be Kenyan or Tanzanian, the speaker also knowingly engages colonial and contemporary politics of identity and belonging.

One of the tragic effects of colonisation and postcolonial nation-building is that the Swahili coast desire for in-between-ness has been under attack. This indeterminacy appears incommensurate with modern autochthony, which is based on the assumption that one’s essential self is constituted by some ancestral relationship to a piece of land. The local desire to emphasise connections across the Indian Ocean is difficult to reconcile with the territorial rootedness required of contemporary citizenship, creating a double bind for coastal residents. This means that stone architecture of old Swahili cities now exists as an over-determined and fraught symbol, its evocation of the ‘elsewhere’ now haunted by the modern spectre of foreignness. Even more tragically, this spectre is now associated with acts of violence in the imaginary of people not familiar with the coast’s historic connections across the sea. For example, the tensions between the central governments of Kenya and Tanzania and their coastal citizens have been heightened in recent years as the

‘war on terror’ has made the Swahili coast one of the main battlegrounds against supra-state Islamism. Moving easily outside state-sanctioned networks of affiliation and community-building, Swahili coast Muslims are now even more suspect in the eyes of others. Yet local people continue to hope that their towns and cities will be recognised as reciprocal places, where foreignness is superseded and solidarity emerges.

p.640

Notes

- 1 The people of the coast were increasingly seen as ‘Arab’ foreigners by mainlanders during the struggle for independence in the 1960s. The sultanate of Zanzibar (which included the coastal regions of present-day Tanzania and Kenya) was indeed ruled by Arabs from Oman, but the majority of Muslims living in east Africa were not part of this ruling elite, although much intermarriage took place between these newcomers and local Muslim families. It is often impossible to categorise who is ‘foreign’ or ‘indigenous’ on the Swahili coast.
- 2 Those elite families who owned large plantations during the sultanate years often presented slavery as a benign form of paternalism. For a full analysis of how and why they sought to justify slavery, see Glassman, *War of Words*, 92–4.

References

- Abungu, G. H. O. and Muturo, H. W. 1993. ‘Coast-interior settlements and social relations in the Kenya hinterland’. In *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns*, edited by T. Shaw, P. J. J. Sinclair, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, 694–704. London: Routledge.
- Allen, J. d. V. 1979. ‘The Swahili house: cultural and ritual concepts underlying its plan and structure’. In *Swahili Houses and Tombs of the Coast of Kenya*, edited by J. d. V. Allen and T. H. Wilson, 1–32. London: Art and Archaeology Research Papers.
- Allen, J. d. V. 1993. *Swahili Origins: Swahili Culture and the Shungwaya Phenomenon*. London: James Currey.
- Bissell, W. 2011 *Urban Design, Chaos, and Colonial Power in Zanzibar*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Brennan, J. 2012. *Taifa: Making Nation and Race in Tanzania*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Chami, F. 1994. *The Tanzanian Coast in the Early First Millennium AD: An Archaeology of the Iron-Working, Farming Communities*. Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Uppsaliensis.
- Chittick, H. N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*. Nairobi and London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Cooper, F. 1977. *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Cooper, F. 2005. *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Cupers, K. 2014. *The Social Project: Housing Postwar France*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Donley-Reid, L. W. 1990. 'A structuring structure: the Swahili house'. In *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space*, edited by S. Kent, 114–26. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fair, L. 2001. *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Colonial Zanzibar, 1890–1945*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Fleisher, J. B. 2015. 'Situating the Swahili house'. In *Theory in Africa, Africa in Theory: Locating Meaning in Archaeology*, edited by S. Wynne-Jones and J. B. Fleisher. London: Routledge.
- Garlake, P. S. 1966. *The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Glassman, J. 1995. *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast 1856–1888*. London: James Currey.
- Glassman, J. 2011. *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Horton, M. C. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Jackson, M. 2013. *Lifeworlds: Essays in Existential Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kusimba, C. M. 1999. *The Rise and Fall of Swahili States*. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press.
- LaViolette, A. 2008. 'Swahili cosmopolitanism in Africa and the Indian Ocean world, AD 600–1500'. *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress* 1: 24–49.
- Lewcock, R. 1976. 'Architectural connections between Africa and parts of the Indian Ocean littoral'. *Art and Archaeology Research Papers* 9: 13–23.
- McCurdy, S. 2006. 'Fashioning sexuality: desire, Manyema ethnicity, and the creation of the Kanga, ca. 1880–1900'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 39 (3): 441–69.
- McIntosh, J. 2009. *The Edge of Islam: Power, Personhood, and Ethnoreligious Boundaries on the Kenya Coast*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Meier, P. 2016. *Swahili Port Cities: The Architecture of Elsewhere*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Mitchell, T. 1988. *Colonizing Egypt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Prestholdt, J. 2008. *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Prestholdt, J. 2014. 'Politics of the soil: separatism, autochthony and decolonization at Kenya's coast'. *Journal of African History* 55 (2): 1–22.

- Rockel, S. J. 2006. *Carriers of Culture: Labor on the Road in Nineteenth Century East Africa*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Rockel, S. J. forthcoming. 'From shore to shore: people, places, and objects between the Swahili coast and Lake Tanganyika'. In *World on the Horizon: Swahili Arts across the Indian Ocean*, edited by P. Meier and A. Purpura. Champaign: Krannert Art Museum.
- Schmidt, K. W. 1888. *Sansibar: Ein Ostafrikanisches Kulturbild*. Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus.
- Sheriff, A. 2001. 'The spatial dichotomy of Swahili towns: the case of Zanzibar in the nineteenth century'. *Azania* 36: 63–82.
- Spear, T. 1984. 'The Shirazi in Swahili traditions, culture, and history'. *History in Africa* 11: 291–305.
- White, L. 2000. *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Willis, J. 1993. *Mombasa, the Swahili and the Making of the Mijikenda*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Young, R. 1995. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race*. London: Routledge.

56

THE FUTURE OF SWAHILI MONUMENTS

George Okello Abungu, Mohamed Mchulla Mohamed, Abdallah Allausy and Abdallah Khamis Ali

Introduction

The Swahili coast is roughly that area between the southern Somalia coast and northern Mozambique. This is an area dotted with stone-built settlements of domestic houses, mosques, tombs, wells and well-planned narrow streets running north–south and east–west. These settlements were built by the Swahili-speaking people of eastern Africa, a Bantu African-speaking people who for centuries have interacted through trade with the outside world and particularly with the Arabs of the Near and Middle East. Arabs started visiting this coast as early as the first century CE or even before. In the course of visits and trade, some settled, intermarried with the locals and became part of Swahili society. There is no doubt therefore that there has been a long period of intermingling of various groups (including Europeans) on this coast and Swahili society – although intrinsically African – has been the beneficiary of this interaction.

The coast of eastern Africa has archaeological evidence dating back to the Early Stone Age, with sites of the Middle and Late Stone Age, as well as the Kwale-type site for eastern Africa's Early Iron Age, found in the hinterland of Mombasa (Soper 1967). Yet, the most common and noticeable archaeological remains today are the Swahili town settlements that dot the entire eastern African coast. In discussing the future of Swahili monuments, one would often and naturally tend to concentrate on the magnificently built structures of the Swahili coast, in the form of the architectural features and notably the houses. This is a tendency often found in the many scholarly works of the eastern African coast. Nevertheless, behind these structures are people, faces, traditions, practices and beliefs that shape the Swahili world and its understanding; the buildings and the entire landscape need to be understood in that way. The natural landscape and environment with its natural resources and opportunities is another crucial factor in the future of the Swahili

monuments. This chapter therefore addresses the issue well aware of the other tangible and intangible factors that have led to the creation of this heritage and have the potential for their sustainability.

Early writings

The Swahili coast has a long recorded history by travellers, geographers and many others who either traversed its coast or gathered information from eyewitnesses who visited the region. So far the earliest written records date to the first century CE, in the form of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, a Greek navigational chart describing the locations, lands and peoples of this region. This was followed by Ptolemy's third-century CE *Geography* that also involves the land of eastern Africa, describing dark people who rode on cows and traded with the Arabs. There appears to have been a pause in written records after that to around the ninth century, although trade and other activities may have gone on especially involving forest products such as ambergris from the horn of Africa, animal skins (such as leopard), rhino horns and elephant tusks, and slaves from eastern Africa.

p.643

The next group of writers consisted of Arab travellers, historians and adventurers, beginning from around the ninth century CE all the way to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Among these were al-Idrisi, Ibn Khaldun and later the prolific Arab writer and traveller Ibn Battuta. They wrote about the western coast of the Indian Ocean, its peoples, resources and the thriving trade that went on between this coast and the Arabian Peninsula. In their descriptions, the people are black and gentle and occupied the land of Zinj. Some went into details, to describe that the people wore white robes and that they were welcoming and traded with Arabs who visited this coast. The fact that the writers were Arabs but described the people of this coast as black rather than Arab is crucial as a reminder that the Swahili were an African people.

Ibn Battuta visited this coast in the fourteenth century and mentions places by name including Mombasa (*Manbasa*), Kilwa and Zanzibar. He described the towns as well-organised and deeply involved in trade with the Arabs, and was often specific about the people stating that the Arab merchants did not trade directly with the local population but through their African hosts who lodged them. Ibn Battuta gives a vivid description of the system of patronage in Mogadishu. He described the political system based on a ruler who also presided over judicial matters, making judgments before returning to the inner part of the palace. The concept of palace found in this work makes it possible in the present to interpret the massive structures found in many Swahili towns, some with arrangements evocative of royalty and power. Ibn Battuta further described in detail the trading goods, including the imports and exports; this is a valuable source for testing archaeological

hypotheses.

The archaeology

Despite the value of the early written records, they are not as abundant as to fully illuminate all aspects of the early development of the Swahili world. The scarcity of written material from the precolonial period and the limited accuracy of oral history after some hundreds of years means that archaeology has proved the most valuable means of reconstructing the history of the Swahili coast. As traders, farmers, fishermen and artisans, the Swahili communities of the coast of eastern Africa settled into permanent and well-structured villages and towns that subsequently grew into city-states. Standing remains of these urban settlements, some dating back to as early as the seventh and eighth centuries ce, are found on this coast. This coast therefore saw some of the earliest developments of urban and complex societies on the continent and serves as a window and laboratory for the research on the development of complex societies in Africa. Swahili sites form an important and crucial feature of the African historical landscape creating powerful memories of the past and its development into the present.

Built heritage of the Swahili coast

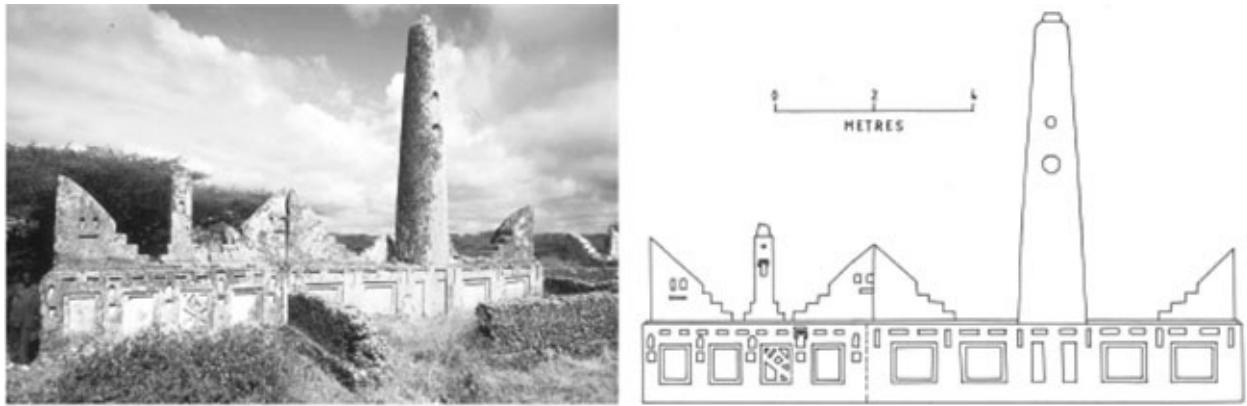
Most Swahili town settlements were and are still located on the mainland coast very close to the sea or on the adjacent islands, a choice that was possibly dictated by the inhabitants' way of life as fishing and farming communities, as well as their involvement as middlemen in the Indian Ocean trade. These sites may also have been chosen due to security concerns. Ranging from small settlements of a couple of dozen houses, a mosque and a well, the towns at times comprised large city-states known for their construction in coral rag and mortar, narrow and winding streets, intricately decorated interior house walls and great and elaborately decorated doors (Kirkman 1964; Abungu and Abungu 2009; Wilson 2016; Gensheimer, Meier, this volume). Some of these features like the narrow streets have come to provide powerful narratives for painters, writers and photographers. For example Lamu's narrow streets have been used as powerful symbols of antiquity, peace, tranquillity and seclusion by, among others, painters, photographers and writers (cf. Bissell, this volume). While today some Swahili settlements have been abandoned and serve as a reminder of the past with rich archaeological and historical context, others – such as Mombasa, Lamu, Zanzibar and Pate – have continued to the present.

The majority of the Swahili settlements/towns/villages that now represent the precolonial Swahili world are scattered across the coastal region ranging from towns of

small, moderate to large sizes. The oldest of the Swahili settlements are found on the offshore islands and archipelagos, notably Zanzibar and Lamu. There is a remarkable concentration of early sites in the Lamu archipelago. Manda is one of the richest and earliest sites on the coast, with unparalleled standing remains and a great volume of early imports of the seventh century CE onwards (Chittick 1984; Horton 1986; Kusimba *et al.*, this volume). Shanga and Pate on Pate Island both date back to the eighth century CE (Horton 1996; Abungu 1996, 2016; Wilson 1980, 2016; Wilson and Omar 1997). Early settlement at Lamu itself dates to the tenth century CE and there are numerous eleventh and twelfth century sites on the mainland/hinterland of the Lamu Archipelago and the Tana River (Kirkman 1966; Chittick 1967; Wilson 1980, 2016; Abungu 1990; Abungu and Muturo 1993; Horton 1996). Yet, some of the most spectacular, well organised and hierarchical in political set up were located on the Tanzania coast. From the eleventh century onwards these city states achieved some of the highest political, social and cultural developments in the Swahili world. At the crossroads of the gold trade from the south, city states like Kilwa Kisiwani, Tumbatu, Kisimani Mafia, Kua and Songo Mnara achieved great sophistication in both political and built environment, not only developing strong leadership and economy (with at times their own minted currency; Pallaver, this volume) but also high end and intricate architectural achievements (Garlake 1966). The monuments of Kilwa Kisiwani and neighbouring Songo Mnara are perhaps the best testament to this (Wynne-Jones, this volume). Together they were inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1981, reflecting the unique quality of their built environment.

Some of these city states/towns in eastern Africa were known to have influence beyond their boundaries. These include places like Pate, Shanga, Lamu and Manda on the Lamu Archipelago (Wilson 1980; Abungu 1996, 2016; Horton 1996) Ungwana, Mwana and Shaka on the Tana Delta (Kirkman 1966; Abungu 1988), Malindi, Gede and Mombasa on the Kenya coast (Kirkman 1963, 1964), Kilwa Kisiwani and Zanzibar on the Tanzanian coast, and Sofala and Chibuene on the northern Mozambique coast (Chittick 1974; Sinclair 1982). All these places have for years attracted the attention of researchers, and have been investigated archaeologically and represent some of the jewels of Swahili civilisation. Some spread their influence through trade to larger and wider regions of eastern, central and southern Africa.

Swahili heritage



[Figure 56.1](#) Photograph and elevation drawing of Ishakani Tombs E and F (both from Wilson 2016, reproduced with permission)

Swahili monuments are varied in nature and style and behind every structure is human thought, feelings, conception, use and appreciation. From simple structures in the form of graves on the ground to massive architectural phenomena like the great palaces and mosques of Kilwa and Gede; from undecorated and whitewashed facades of buildings to intricately decorated plasterworks in the inner (*ndani*) parts of the houses; from a small domestic house to a palace and from a simple undecorated wooden door to the most elaborately decorated ones. The intricately carved doors, the plasterwork cornices, niches and furniture all form a complete unit of a Swahili monument. Even in ruins, the majesty of these crafted monuments is not lost. Some examples from the Lamu Archipelago will suffice. It is here that some of the most architecturally pleasing and significant stone structures in eastern Africa are preserved. For example, the site of Ishakani, dated to around the thirteenth century CE and now abandoned, has the most appealing and aesthetically striking tombs in the whole of eastern Africa ([Figure 56.1](#)).

In a review (undated) of the book *Lamu: Kenya's Enchanted Island* (Abungu and Abungu 2009) David Kaiza, a Ugandan journalist and art critic, has made a thought-provoking observation on Swahili architecture by stating that,

this sombrely gesturing heritage is evocative and reassuring – perhaps because of the stone and coral facades. But if you wanted to look for honesty in the beautiful – these houses are very good illustrations; nothing precipitate, nothing over the top; mostly rustic, even rough around edges and surfaces, their restraint can only win respect for the people who created them.

This observation captures the complexities and simplicities that co-exist in this heritage at the same time and in the same place. It also recognises the invaluable knowledge of the creators, underlining the important role of a traditional knowledge system that has ensured its existence. Thus, for the future of the monuments to be secure, the transfer of this knowledge to younger generations who understand and appreciate this heritage must be assured. It is not a mechanical process but the building of an appreciative mindset among the potential owners and guardians.

The Swahili coast, with its numerous monuments, is not a landscape of single but many testimonies. The various narratives that make its history are moulded from its fertile hinterland for farming and cattle rearing, forests for the exploitation of forest products, rich marine life for fisheries, deep and shallow sheltered waters for harbours, boat repair and careening, and islands located not too far away from the mainland that could serve as a security measure. They are further moulded by the Swahili understanding of their world and world view, their cosmology and Islam as their religion. These are further expressed not only in building construction and decorations but embedded in Swahili poetry and scholarship as evidenced by Swahili epic works such as the poetry of Mwana Kupona of Pate and others (Chittick 1969). However, these monuments' histories are not only covered in the cloth of an innocent past; on the contrary they intertwine people, histories and actions that may range from what can be considered the best to the worst. Time forgives and sometimes forgets.

p.646

Witnesses to the past

More than the coral and lime that today stand out in the form of monuments, these ancient city states/towns are constructs of centuries of trade in ivory, forest goods, animal products, precious stones and humans. As majestic as they are in silence, they are witness to a suppressed past of slavery and the slave trade and of subjugation and exploitation without which such a high degree of developments could have been difficult to realise (Kusimba 2004; Kiriamia 2014). They are, however, also an achievement of human development through interaction, trade and effective use of the environment. Majestic and bold, these Swahili monuments have not only been an attraction to historians, geographers and adventurers of the past, but to many scholars going back to the end of the nineteenth century. They are not only found in works of travellers, adventurers and scholarly publications but also in coffee table books of all kinds.

These settlements together with their historical vestiges have been centres of attention of planners, conservators, researchers, architects, donors and even tourism concerns. Many have been recognised for their architectural and/or cultural qualities/significance and elevated to world heritage status after meeting the criteria of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), and therefore comparable with the best of the best in the world. Among these are the towns of Lamu and Zanzibar and the ancient towns of Kilwa Kisiwani and Songo Mnara. Many with exceptional qualities and potential world heritage status like Pate, Gede, Ungwana, Shaka and Mwana on the Kenyan coast, and Bagamoyo and Mafia on the Tanzanian coast, still await their time for international recognition.

Crafts and skills

Conservation of heritage is possibly as old as humans although different parts of the world have done it differently. While the Swahili people have always been conservators of their environment including their monuments, the Western sense of central-government-controlled conservation approach came with colonialism. The Swahili build their structures with permanent materials of coral rag and mortar ensuring their long life. Roofs were often made of hardwoods but also of mangrove poles. Often treated, these poles could last for over a hundred years after which they were replaced.

A core of master craftsmen developed among the Swahili, not only to carry out the construction of these buildings that were at times quite complex in nature and décor, but also to carry out maintenance/conservation work. These people (master craftsmen) are highly respected within the society and they can make a decent living from their occupation, something that assured the continuous existence of the trade. The transfer of knowledge was therefore passed from generation to generation, assuring the continuity of the technical knowhow and human capacity to meet the challenges of conservation.

In addition, even within abandoned settlements, community members continued to use old mosques that were seen and treated as places of spirit propitiation (Abungu and Mutoro 1993). And since no other structure apart from a mosque can be built where a mosque has been built before, one finds either old ruined mosques or recent ones built after past collapse, ensuring continuity and the maintenance of the archaeological record. All these ensure the use of monuments and their survival through continued use even if this use was at times more clandestine than open practice.

p.647

The Swahili also ensured the survival of their monuments through reclamation of the abandoned buildings and their reconstruction for use especially with expanding population. This is a practice vividly witnessed in a place like Pate where the new town is moving into the old settlement and people are appropriating the monuments for use. This shows there was a conscious attempt to ensure continuity with the past even if there had been a period of discontinuity; a conscious conservation strategy through adoption and use of the past.

With colonialism came a much more central control system. 'Abandoned' settlements were classified as sites, given legal protection and mystified as places of national importance with restricted access for the very owners, the communities, and no use except as protected areas and the preserve of researchers. This removed responsibility and ownership of some of these so-called abandoned settlements from the communities and put them into the hands of the government bureaucrats. Beginning in the 1940s colonial governments employed researchers/wardens who took over research and administrative

responsibilities of these sites.

Some of these administrators did commendable work. James Kirkman, for example, who is widely credited as the first serious scholar of Swahili archaeology, held the position of Warden at Gedi National Park (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2015a; Sutton, this volume). Yet, colonial administrators also replaced in many cases the locals as the holders and custodians of the knowledge of their past. With this came the loss of control of their heritage into the hands of the government; this situation continued into the postcolonial period, meaning that local communities are often distanced from the management of their own heritage (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2015b; Wilson and Omar 1997; Abungu 2016). Tourism has now become the overriding concern in conserving Swahili towns. Due to their sheer numbers on the landscape and their branding as national heritage sites, eliminating the role of communities, these places face challenges in terms of their conservation and are open to deterioration through neglect over time. Tourism and development of coastal areas create threats as well as opportunities: proposed and ongoing development on the coast has created an atmosphere of land speculation, land grabbing and site destruction.

Nostalgia and orientalism

Some of the Swahili monuments that have attracted the most attention are the major living Swahili settlements that still portray most of the characteristics of what is considered by some as their ancient majesty and sophistication. Among these are Lamu with its religious and cultural attributes and Zanzibar with its exotic atmosphere (Bissell, this volume). Seen as exotic, innocent, authentic and nostalgic these Swahili towns have been adored by diverse audiences ranging from scholars, diplomats, philanthropists and backpackers to the Hollywood film stars who have been buying properties in these towns since they became World Heritage sites.

It is important to recall that Lamu town attracted the attention of government planners as far back as the early 1970s. First conceived as a possible second port of the country after Mombasa, its heritage was recognised and planning studies carried out that recommended its conservation. Thus being the oldest living town in Kenya and possibly one of the few Swahili settlements to have retained its original urban structure, Lamu became a natural choice for conservation, restoration and a sensitive urban development programme. This programme was first initiated by the Kenya National Museums and the Ministry of Lands and Settlements in 1975. Other accompanying values and qualities of the whole area of the archipelago were recognised.

Subsequent years saw different conservation plans developed, beginning with Usam

Ghaidan's *Lamu: A Study in Conservation* (1975; see also 1971, 1974) to Pulver and Siravo's *Planning Lamu: Conservation of an East African Seaport* (1986). These were followed by concrete conservation strategies and actions including the opening of a permanent Conservation Office under the National Museums of Kenya, Lamu. Since then a lot of conservation work has been carried out that has included financial support to private house owners to conserve their buildings in the stonetown. This EU-funded project saw the restoration of over 20 private properties with the owners contributing 25 per cent of the total costs and the rest in the form of grants. Due to good practice and the conservation of the town, Lamu became a World Heritage site in 2003 further attracting more attention. However, this attention and the port concept of the early 1970s has returned to haunt Lamu's survival, especially the future of its Swahili monuments and traditions; an enormous port is now under construction in the archipelago, connecting to a rail connection. This threatens the fabric of the historic town.

Zanzibar Town underwent decay and deterioration of its magnificent architectural heritage dating to the Omani period of the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, after the Omani regime was toppled in the Revolution of 1964 (Sheriff 1995, this volume). Yet the town has managed to recover from the 1980s and 90s. It attracted the attention of donors and heritage organisations like the Aga Khan Foundation and others who put in both technical and financial support to rescue and restore its rich architectural ensemble. The government established the Zanzibar Stone Town Authority to manage the conservation of the old town and Zanzibar's monuments were assured of survival. However, with this came more visibility and attraction to the eyes of the developers and tourists. Today Zanzibar is becoming a victim of its success as there is competition between conservation and development in which the latter may be winning and, as such, putting the monuments of Zanzibar into jeopardy.

Transfer of knowledge

In trying to conserve Swahili monuments and heritage in general, including the cultural industries, a number of attempts have been made to formalise the transfer of the knowledge of construction and craft-making to the youth, mostly by government bodies entrusted with the management of heritage in their respective countries in eastern Africa. The National Museums of Kenya set up the Swahili Cultural Centre in Mombasa, with a satellite centre in Lamu to revive and develop Swahili culture including production of artisans and masons. Mombasa is one of the major Swahili old towns described by Ibn Battuta with one of the old and well-established conservation offices (Kiriama, this volume). The Centre working with ILO at first got a lot of donor support that subsequently dried up. Today it is a shadow of its former self, despite producing some very good heritage people who have made a mark in the heritage landscape.

In Tanzania, several initiatives have been undertaken. A team was set up in Zanzibar for lime-making and purification, contributing to the understanding and use of this material in Swahili house construction and restoration. The Department of Antiquities in Dar es Salaam set up a building training institute in Bagamoyo that for some time produced artisans for the conservation and maintenance of lime-built structures in Tanzania. Like the other institutions of that nature its existence depended on donor funding. A programme of training in conservation and traditional building techniques at Kilwa Kisiwani and Songo Mnara was funded during conservation efforts there by multiple donors including the World Bank, World Monuments Fund and US Ambassador's Fund. This dependence on external support could be considered one of the dangers to the conservation and preservation of the Swahili monuments.

p.649

The other threat comes from the various governments' commitment to the 'developments' that range from port infrastructure and oil and gas exploration, to the expansion of cement factories and tourism facilities within the coast of eastern Africa. This at times also leads to displacement of the local population. If not managed properly by balancing conservation and development, then the future of Swahili monuments could be in jeopardy.

Conclusion

The beauty of Swahili heritage is that it is often permanent but also flexible enough to absorb and give; it is dynamic while remaining truthful to its spirit. Thus one can compare the Swahili settlements of the tenth or twelfth centuries and those of contemporary times; the similarities are more than the differences.

There are people who have argued that Mombasa, Malindi and Zanzibar became mostly Arabic, somewhat eastern, somewhat western in their latter periods and not really African. This may be the case, but should not be seen as making them less 'Swahili'. Towns and cultures are dynamic, especially in the face of globalisation, and cannot be expected to remain static and cast in stone. All the developments that have taken place have taken place in an African Swahili environmental setting with its deep feelings, vibrant spirit, rhythmic tempo, traditions and long history of cosmopolitanism (LaViolette 2008). Whatever may look Arabic, western or eastern is just part of the accumulation of layers of narratives and heritage of which the Swahili world is comprised and moulded. No culture can live and survive in isolation and the Swahili are no exception; the main issue is for it to remain faithful and truthful to its foundation and its Swahili spirit including the appreciation and conservation of its accumulated monumental heritage and knowledge.

Swahili monuments represent the totality of the Swahili world including its world view.

They are both aesthetic as well as spiritual/cultural representations of the physical imprints of the Swahili that saw growth over centuries. Its long historical journey resulted in the luxury of a culture nurtured by the waters of the Indian Ocean and trade, enduring through rough, tough and easy times.

Threats to these monuments of the past and their associated features – including the intangible heritage that gives them meaning – are not only a threat to a historical narrative that defines the formation of a people, their identity and history, but also the uprooting of the very being of the Swahili on a land that is home. Eastern Africa and the entire Swahili world will of course be the poorer with the destruction of any of these historical and archaeological records of the past.

References

- Abungu, G. H. O. 1988. 'Ungwana on the Tana'. In *Urban Origins in Eastern Africa, Project Proposals and Workshop Summaries*, edited by P. Sinclair and S. Wandibba. Stockholm: The Swedish Central Board of Antiquities 1.
- Abungu, G. H. O. 1990. 'Communities on the River Tana, Kenya: an archaeological study of relations between the delta and the river basin, 700–1890 AD'. PhD diss., University of Cambridge.
- Abungu, G. H. O. 1996. 'Pate: a Swahili town revisited'. *Kenya Past and Present* 28: 50–60.
- Abungu G. H. O. 2016. 'Walking the long path to partnership: archaeology and communities in East Africa – relevance, access and ownership'. In *Community Archaeology in Africa*, edited by P. Schmidt and I. Pikirayi. London: Routledge.
- Abungu, G. H. O. and Abungu, L. 2009. *Lamu: Kenya's Enchanted Island*. New York: Rizzoli.
- Abungu, G. H. O. and Muturo, H. W. 1993. 'Coast–interior settlements and social relations in the Kenya hinterland'. In *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns*, edited by T. Shaw, P. J. J. Sinclair, B. Andah and A. Okpoko, 694–704. London: Routledge.
- Allen, J. de V. 1974. *Lamu town: A Guide*. Lamu.
- Chittick, H. N. 1967. 'Discoveries in the Lamu Archipelago'. *Azania* 2: 37–67.
- Chittick, H. N. 1969. 'A new look at the history of Pate'. *The Journal of African History* 10.
- Chittick, H. N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*. Nairobi and London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Chittick, H. N. 1984. *Manda: Excavations at an Island Port on the Kenya Coast*. Nairobi and London: British Institute in Eastern Africa.

- Garlake, P. S. 1966. *The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Ghaidan, U. I. 1971. 'African heritage: the stone houses of Lamu'. *Plan East Africa*, May/June.
- Ghaidan, U. I. 1974. 'Lamu: a case study of the Swahili town'. *Town Planning Review* 45: 1.
- Ghaidan, U. I. 1975. *Lamu: A Study of the Swahili Town*. Dar es Salaam: East African Literature Bureau.
- Horton, M. C. 1986. 'Asiatic colonization of the East African coast: the Manda evidence'. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2: 201–13.
- Horton, M. C. 1996. *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Kiriama, H. O. 2014. 'Memory and heritage: the Shimoni slave caves in Southern Kenya'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 49 (4): 545–6.
- Kirkman, J. S. 1954. *The Arab City of Gedi: Excavations at the Great Mosque, Architecture and Finds*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Kirkman, J. S. 1963. *Gedi: The Palace*. The Hague: Mouton & Co.
- Kirkman, J. S. 1964. *Men and Monuments in the East African Coast*. London: Lutterworth Press.
- Kirkman, J. S. 1966. *Ungwana on the Tana*. The Hague: Mouton & Co.
- Kusimba, C. M. 2004. 'The archaeology of slavery in East Africa'. *African Archaeological Review* 21: 59–88.
- LaViolette, A. 2008. 'Swahili cosmopolitanism in Africa and the Indian Ocean world, AD 600–1500'. *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress* 1: 24–49.
- Meier, P. 2016. *Swahili Port Cities: The Architecture of Elsewhere*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Pulver, A. and Siravo, F. 1986. *Planning Lamu: Conservation of an East African Seaport*. Nairobi: The National Museums of Kenya.
- Sheriff, A. 1995. *The History and Conservation of Zanzibar Stone Town*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Sinclair, P. J. J. 1982. 'Chibuene: an early trading site in southern Mozambique'. *Paideuma* 28: 149–64.
- Soper, R. 1967. 'Kwale: an early Iron Age site in south-eastern Kenya'. *Azania* 2: 1–17.
- Wilson, T. H. 1980. *The Monumental Architecture and Archaeology of the Central and Southern Kenya Coast*. Nairobi: National Museums of Kenya.
- Wilson T. H. 2016. *Swahili Monumental Architecture and Archaeology North of the Tana*. National Museums of Kenya, Nairobi, Kenya.
- Wilson, T. H. and Omar, A. L. 1994. 'Preservation of cultural heritage on the East African coast'. In *Plundering Africa's Past*, edited by R. J. McIntosh and P. R. Schmidt, 225–49.

Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

- Wilson, T. H. and Omar, A. L. 1997. 'Archaeological investigations at Pate'. *Azania* 32: 31–76.
- Wynne-Jones, S. and Fleisher, J. 2015a. 'Fifty years in the archaeology of the eastern African coast: a methodological history'. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 50 (4): 519–41.
- Wynne-Jones, S. and Fleisher, J. 2015b. 'Conservation, community archaeology and the archaeologist as mediator at Songo Mnara, Tanzania'. *Journal of Field Archaeology* 40 (1): 110–19.

INDEX

Note: The following abbreviations have been used – f = figure; t = table; n = note

- Abbasid Muslims [54](#), [65](#), [151](#), [169](#), [240](#), [434](#)
 Abubakar, Sultan [617](#)
 Abungu, G.H.O. [63](#), [187](#), [616](#), [618](#), [645](#)
 Acacia-Commiphora bushlands and thickets [29](#)
 Acua (Comoros) [278](#)
 Aden (South Arabia) [384](#)
 aDNA see [archaeological \(ancient\) DNA](#)
 Aepyornis eggs (giant Malagasy bird) [370](#)
 Africa: invention of [73](#)
 African Archaeological Network [270](#)
 African Humid Period [24](#)
 ‘Africity’ [70](#), [637](#)
 Afro-Eurasian world system [435](#); emergence of pre-Swahili culture (C1–6) [365–6](#), [367f](#), [368](#); birth of Swahili culture (C7–10th) [368–70](#); rise/recession of Swahili culture (C10–14th) [370–3](#); new rise of eastern Africa (C15th) [373](#), [374f](#), [375](#)
 Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP) [569](#)
 Afro-Shirazi revolution (1964) [11](#)
 Afrobarometer survey (2011; 2013) [76n1](#)
 Aga Khan Foundation [648](#)
 agricultural economy [107](#), [112](#), [179](#), [188](#), [298](#), [644](#); crop-processing [298–9](#), [583](#), [584](#); mosaics [407](#); origins of Swahili Age [5](#), [6–7](#), [8](#), [10](#), [24](#), [32](#); plant resources [351](#), [352](#), [354](#); town/village relationships [197](#), [201](#); see also [animal husbandry](#); [plantation economy](#)
 Aḥmad b. Sumayt [561–2](#)
 al Busaidi, Seyyid Majid [638](#)
 Āl Jamal al-Layl clan [558](#)
 Āl Shaykh Abū Bakr b. Sālim clan [558](#)
 al-Barawī, Shaykh Uways [559](#)
 al-Barwānī, Muḥammad ‘Abu Ḥārith’ [563](#)
 al-Bîrûnî [372](#), [373](#)

al-Ğulandānī, Sa‘īd and Sulaymān [147–8](#)
 al-Ḥaddād, ‘Abd Allāh [559](#)
 al-Hasan bin Sulaiman (Mahdali dynasty) [55](#), [65](#), [256](#), [384](#)
 al-Ḥisbhī, ‘Alī b. Muḥammad [559](#)
 al-Idrisi (Idrîsî) (Arabic traveller) [372](#), [373](#), [421](#), [496](#), [620](#), [643](#); Mambrui/Malindi [205](#), [212](#); metals and metal-working [306](#), [314](#)
 Al-Jahiz [369](#)
 al-Layl, Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Alawī Jamal (Habib Saleh) [559](#)
 al-Maawy, Hussein Soud [71](#)
 al-Mansaby, Muhammad b. Abdulkadir [534](#)
 al-Mas’udi (Mas‘ûdî) (Arabic traveller/geographer) [8](#), [55](#), [233](#), [368–9](#), [463](#)
 al-Mazrui, Shaykh al-Amin [562](#)
 al-Nawwawī, Abū Zakariyy [558](#), [560](#)
 al-Shabaab (Somali Islamist terrorist organisation) [573](#), [611](#)
 al-Sîrâfî [369](#)
 ‘Alawiyya (Sufi order) [523](#), [558](#), [559–60](#)
 Ali ibn al-Hasan Shirazi, Sultan [64](#), [256](#), [311](#)
 Allen, J. de V. [300](#), [529](#), [591](#)
 Allibert, C. [112](#), [269](#), [270](#), [271](#), [277](#), [279](#); et al. (1983) [186](#)
 Ambariotelo (Bay of Ampasindava) (Madagascar) [287](#)
 ambergris [156](#), [382](#), [432–3](#), [643](#)
 Ampasimahavelona (Vohémar) [143](#)
 Androy [187](#)
 Anglo-German Treaty (1886) [568](#)
 animal husbandry [7](#), [288](#), [298](#), [337](#), [340](#), [363](#); Comoros [270](#), [278](#); Indian Ocean trade and communications [107](#), [110](#), [111](#); origins of Swahili Age [139](#), [141](#), [173](#); plant resources [354](#); subsistence economies [340](#), [341](#), [342f](#), [343](#), [346](#); see also [agricultural economy](#)
 animal resources see [animal husbandry](#); [fish and fishing](#); [hunting and foraging](#); [marine resources](#)
 animal skins [137](#), [156](#), [410](#), [643](#)
 Antalaotse (people of the sea) [267](#)
 Antiquities, Department of (Dar es Salaam) [648](#)
 Antsiraka Boira cemetery (Comoros) [278](#)
 Arab City of Gedi, The (Kirkman) [222](#)
 Arabs and Arabic people [2](#), [6](#), [10](#), [22](#), [157](#), [639](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [368](#), [370](#); China [289](#); documentation [54](#), [56](#), [58](#); ethnic identification [68–9](#), [71–2](#), [77n3](#), [294](#), [640n1](#); inland entanglement [395](#); interpretation of Swahili world and [55](#), [60](#), [62](#); language and linguistics [54](#), [56](#), [57](#), [67](#), [127](#), [557](#), [560](#); Malindi (Kenya) [206](#);

socioeconomic and political networks [523–4](#); Swahili origins debate [135–7](#); travellers [8](#), [39](#), [55](#), [67](#), [295](#), [643](#); see also [Islam and Islamic culture](#)

Arabuko-Sokoke Forest (Kenya) [29](#)

aragonite (giant clam) bead production [329](#), [330](#), [450](#)

archaeobotanical sources and methods [109–10](#), [113](#), [232](#), [350–1](#), [357](#), [358](#)

archaeological (ancient) DNA (aDNA) [82](#), [90](#), [91t](#), [110](#), [267](#)

archaeological research: colonialism [58–9](#); dating by architectural style/Islamic reference [63–5](#); excavation methods [60](#), [62](#), [64](#), [66](#); external vs. indigenous origins [3](#); first proto-Swahili settlements [141–2](#), [642](#); medieval period [55](#); origins debate and ‘Afro-Arab’ culture [135–7](#); Portuguese dominance [56–8](#); post-colonialism [59–61](#); post-pioneer [65–6](#); pre-Swahili coast [54–5](#); recognition of Swahili world [61f](#), [62f](#), [63](#); technologies [63–5](#), [459](#)

architectural style [4](#), [8](#), [36](#), [214](#), [487](#), [625](#); dating by style [63–5](#); ethnic identification [72](#); houses [530–1](#); maritime [45–6](#), [47f](#); medieval period [64](#); Pate [617–19](#); stone [157](#), [158](#), [185](#); see also [built environment](#)

Arikamedu (India) [60](#), [61](#)

aromatic products [156](#)

Asian house shrew (*Suncus murinus*) [111](#)

Askew, K. [296](#)

ASP see [Afro-Shirazi Party](#)

Austria [453f](#), [454](#)

Austronesians [127](#), [142](#), [336](#), [369](#), [370](#), [431](#)

Azania (Zanj) [54–5](#), [105](#), [142](#), [381](#), [419](#)

Ba-Alawi clan [81](#), [98](#)

Bagamoyo (Pamanzi) [10](#), [41f](#), [551](#), [573](#), [648](#); excavations [277](#), [279](#); Kilwa-Nyasa caravan route [541](#), [543](#)

Bajuni (Lamu) [510](#)

Bajuni origin (Grottanelli translation) [152](#)

Bakari, Said [151](#)

Baker, E.C. [149](#)

Bambandyanalo [372](#)

Bambara groundnut (*Voandzeia subterranean*) [180](#)

Bambata pottery [139](#)

bamboo [270](#)

bananas [108](#), [353](#)

Bandarikuu [163](#), [166–7](#), [232](#); see also [Kimimba](#); [Pemba](#); [Tumbe](#)

Bantu linguistic family [xxvii](#), [3](#), [57](#), [136](#), [266–7](#), [297](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [366](#), [370](#); animal husbandry [340](#); ethnic identification [72](#), [73–4](#), [76](#), [77n4–5](#); genetic ancestry [81](#), [90](#), [96](#), [97](#); Indian Ocean trade and communications [110](#), [642](#)

Banu Ghaylān [151](#), [154n8](#)

Barbosa, Duarte [504](#), [620](#)
Barghash, Sultan [148](#), [454](#), [535](#), [539](#), [568](#), [625](#)
barracuda [37](#)
Barros, João de [64](#), [152](#), [256](#), [509–10](#), [623](#)
basket traps (tortoises) [106](#)
basket-making [414](#)
beads and bead-making [7](#), [263](#), [270](#), [323](#), [324f](#), [459](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [369](#), [372](#), [375](#); Chibuene [177](#), [178f](#), [179](#), [180](#); China [434](#); coinage and currency [447](#), [448](#), [450](#), [451](#), [452](#), [455](#); Comoros [467–8](#); Europe [466](#), [468–9](#), [548](#), [550](#); Gede [227–8](#); Indian Ocean trade and communications [106](#), [107](#), [113](#), [195](#); inland entanglement [391](#), [394f](#), [396](#), [397f](#); Kilwa Island [256](#), [312](#); Kilwa Kisiwani [463](#), [464t](#), [465t](#), [466](#); Madagascar [288](#), [289](#); Mambui/Malindi (Kenya) [206](#), [210](#); Manda (Lamu Archipelago) [158](#), [160](#), [462–3](#), [465](#); mosaics [408](#), [410](#), [414](#); origins of Swahili Age [138](#), [139](#), [141](#), [142](#); Pemba [164](#), [166](#); Shanga [461–2](#), [465](#); society and social composition [298](#), [300](#), [302](#); Songo Mnara [257](#), [466](#), [467f](#); Tumbe [463](#); Unguja Ukuu [172f](#), [458](#), [459](#), [460f](#), [461f](#), [465](#); Zanzibar [240](#); see also [craft production and industry](#)
bees-wax [382](#)
Belitung wreck (Sumatra) [381](#), [382](#), [435](#)
Berg, F.J. [152](#)
Berlin Conference (1884–5) [9](#), [10](#), [356](#)
Biginagwa, Thomas [357](#)
biodiversity [29–30](#), [32](#)
biological ancestry see [genetic ancestry research](#)
Bitá, C. [206](#)
black-and-white ware [210](#)
black-on-yellow ware [210](#), [211](#), [224t](#), [225](#), [282](#), [372](#)
blacksmithing see [iron and iron-working](#)
blood brotherhood ceremonies [571](#)
blue-on-white porcelain [224t](#), [439](#)
boats and ships [7](#), [22](#), [55](#), [139](#), [370](#); canoes [270](#); Indian Ocean trade and communications [106](#), [108](#); medieval period [38](#), [39](#), [43](#), [47](#), [48](#); see also [dhow trade](#)

‘Bombay Africans’ [625](#)
bone goods [108](#), [345](#)
Book of Curiosities [169](#)
Book of the Kings of Pate (chronicle) [148](#)
Book of the Marvels of India, The (al-Sîrâfi) [369](#)
Borneo [108](#)
botanical surveys [357](#), [358t](#)
brass [310](#)

Breen, C.N. [190](#)
bricks (fired) [143](#), [157](#)
British Academy [59](#)
‘British Archaeology Abroad’ [60](#)
British East Africa see [Kenya](#)
British East African Association [568](#)
British Empire [9–10](#), [245](#), [454](#), [525](#), [594](#); dhow trade [379–80](#), [385](#); historiography [57](#), [58](#);
Lamu [608](#), [609](#); Mombasa [623–4](#); slave trade [566](#), [567](#); Zanzibar [537](#), [538](#), [595–6](#)
British Institute for History and Archaeology in East Africa [59–60](#), [214](#), [487](#), [624](#); origins
of Swahili Age [137](#), [157](#), [169](#)
British Royal Navy [625](#)
bronze [309](#), [310](#), [454](#)
Brown, Helen [449](#)
bubonic plague [373](#)
built environment [48–9](#), [64](#), [211](#), [233](#), [378](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [370](#); Islam and
Islamic culture [637](#); mangrove ecosystems [500](#), [530](#), [592](#); monuments [643–4](#); origins of
Swahili Age [137](#), [141](#); slave trade [637–8](#); see also [architectural style](#)
burials [158](#), [210](#), [215](#), [257](#), [441](#); architectural style and [487–8](#); Chibuene [173](#), [176](#), [179](#);
Comoros [270](#), [273](#), [274](#), [277](#), [278](#); grave sites [577](#), [579](#); Islamic-style [143](#), [217](#), [617](#),
[618](#); Pemba Island [232](#), [233](#); see also [tombs](#)
Burton, Richard (explorer) [315](#), [533](#), [537](#); coinage and currencies [451](#), [452](#), [454](#)
Busaidi (Bū Sa‘īdī/Bu’saidi) dynasty (Oman) [5–6](#), [9](#), [544](#), [594](#), [638](#); Islam and Islamic
culture [558](#), [561](#); socioeconomic and political networks [518](#), [522](#), [524](#)
Busora (Comoros) [280](#)
Buyids [371](#), [489](#)
Buzurg ibn Shahriyar [180](#)
Bwana Heri bin Juma [69](#)
Bwana Mufama Luvali, Sultan of Faza [520](#)
Bwembweni [38](#), [40](#), [44](#)
Bweni (Mafia Archipelago) [582](#), [584](#), [585](#)

calcite sandstone wares [160](#)
Cambay (India) [384](#), [423](#)
camels [345](#)
Cape Delgado (Cabo Delgado) [19](#), [188](#)
Cape Guardafui (Somaliland) [19](#)
Caplan, P. [72–3](#), [294](#)
captive peoples see [slave trade](#)
caravan trade [357](#), [375](#), [407](#), [451](#), [534](#); inland entanglement [390](#), [393](#), [397–8](#);
socioeconomic and political networks [524](#), [525](#); see also [Kilwa-Nyasa caravan route](#)
carnelian [450](#), [468](#)

cash crops [583](#), [584](#)
 cashew nuts [356](#), [584](#)
 Casson, Lionel see [Periplus of the Erythraean Sea \(Periplus Maris Erythraei \(PME\)\)](#)
 cats [107](#), [345](#), [346](#)
 cattle [189](#), [336](#), [341](#), [342f](#), [343](#)
 causeways [45–6](#), [47f](#), [48](#)
 CCC see [Chama cha Mapinduzi](#)
 celadon ware [207](#), [210](#), [224t](#), [241](#)
 cemeteries [233](#), [253](#); Comoros [278](#), [280](#); Mambui/Malindi [206](#), [209](#), [211](#)
 Central mosque (Zanzibar) [241](#)
 Central Rift Valley [405](#)
 ceramics [6](#), [7](#), [110](#), [135](#), [158](#), [548](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [370](#), [372](#), [373](#); domestic production [61–2](#); Early Iron Age (EIA) [139](#), [340](#); foreign trade [8](#), [60–1](#), [107](#), [139](#), [159–60](#), [157](#), [158](#); inland entanglement [391](#), [393](#), [394f](#), [396f](#); Limbo [37](#), [139](#), [313](#); Limbo (Tanzania) [37](#), [139](#), [325](#); long-distance exchange [472](#), [473f](#), [474](#), [475t](#); medieval [39](#), [43](#), [46](#); mosaics [404](#), [408](#); society and social composition [301](#), [302](#); terminology [xxviii](#); town/village relationships [195](#), [199](#), [200](#); unglazed earthenware [140](#); urbanism [186](#), [187](#), [188–9](#); volume of long-distance exchange [476–7](#), [478t&f](#), [479f](#), [480f](#), [481f](#), [482](#); **sites**: Chibuene [177](#), [178](#), [179](#); Comoros [269](#), [271](#), [272](#), [273](#), [277](#), [279](#), [281–2](#); Gede [221](#), [224t](#), [227–8](#); Kilwa Island [256](#), [257](#); Madagascar [288](#), [289](#); Manda [475](#), [477](#), [479](#); Mikindani (Mtwara) and Southern Coast [262](#), [263f](#); Mombasa [621](#); Pate [617](#); Pemba Island [161](#), [164](#), [166](#), [167](#), [234](#); Shanga (Pate Island) [214](#), [217–18](#), [475–6](#), [477](#), [479](#); Tumbe [476](#), [477](#), [478](#), [479](#), [481](#); Unguja Ukuu (Zanzibar) [169](#), [170f](#), [171f](#), [172f](#), [472](#); Zanzibar (Unguja) [240](#), [241](#); see also [Chinese ceramics](#); [craft production and industry](#); [Early Tana Tradition/Triangular-Incised Ware \(ETT/TIW\)](#); [Islamic ceramics](#); [Tana Tradition/Triangular-Incised Ware \(TT/TIW\)](#)
 Cerulli, E. [151](#), [154n7](#)
 Chake Chake (Pemba) [10](#)
 Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCC) [579](#)
 Chamama (Changia cha Maendeleo Mafia (Cooperative for the Development of Mafia)) [586](#)
 Chami, F.A. [xxviii](#), [3](#), [247](#), [261](#), [270](#); craft production and industry [311](#), [464](#), [466](#)
 Changsha stoneware [218](#), [435](#), [436f](#), [479f](#)

Chanudet, Claude [186](#), [269](#), [273](#), [277](#), [281](#)
 charcoal-making [322](#), [408](#)
 Chaudhuri, K.N. [383–4](#)
 Chibuene [8](#), [19](#), [142](#), [189](#), [369](#), [469](#); excavations [175](#), [176f](#), [177f](#), [178f](#), [179–80](#); see also [Mozambique](#)
 chickens [107](#), [111](#), [341](#), [345](#), [346](#)

Chifundi (dialect) [125](#), [126](#)
China [107](#), [166](#), [221](#), [327](#), [381](#), [419](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [368](#), [370](#), [371](#), [373](#), [374](#), [375](#); beads and bead-making [465t](#), [466](#), [467f](#), [468](#); early contact with eastern Africa [430](#), [431f](#), [432–4](#); Madagascar [287](#), [289](#); Manda [159](#), [160–1](#); origins of Swahili Age [141](#), [142](#); pillar tombs [206](#); textiles [519](#); Unguja Ukuu [171](#), [173](#)
Chinese ceramics [8](#), [236](#), [241](#), [263](#), [282](#); consumption of [441](#); Dusun ware [480f](#); as indicator of Sino-African trade [434–5](#), [436f](#), [437f](#), [438f](#), [439f](#), [440](#); long-distance exchange [479](#), [482](#); Longquan wares (China) [207](#), [208](#), [209](#), [210](#), [211](#), [212](#); Madagascar [289](#); Mambui/Malindi (Kenya) [206](#), [207](#), [208](#), [209f](#), [210](#), [211–12](#); Mombasa [621](#); Shanga (Pate Island) [218](#); see also [ceramics](#)
Chittick, Neville [136](#), [186](#), [251](#), [487](#); beads and bead-making [323](#), [462](#), [464](#), [465](#), [466](#); historiography [58–9](#), [60](#), [61](#), [63–4](#), [65](#), [66](#); Manda [156](#), [157](#), [158](#), [215](#), [474](#); medieval period [42](#), [43](#); metals and metal-working [308](#), [309](#), [311](#), [312](#); Pate [616](#); Unguja Ukuu [169](#)
chlorite schist stoneware [160](#), [233](#), [288](#), [370](#); Comoros [266](#), [274](#), [281](#), [282](#)
Chole Island (Mafia Archipelago) [245](#), [585](#)
Chombo (Kenya) [340](#), [341](#)
Christianity [11](#), [56](#), [574](#), [582](#), [607](#)
Chronicle of Anjouan (Pouwels trans.) [151](#)
Chronicle of Kilwa [148](#)
Chronicle of Ngazija [151](#)
Chronicle of Vumba Kuu [148](#)
chronicles see [oral traditions and chronicles](#)
Chwaka (Pemba Island) [4](#), [231](#), [314](#), [327f](#), [354](#); excavations [163](#), [164](#), [234–5](#), [236](#), [242](#); Kaliwa [199](#), [202](#), [355](#); mosques [491](#), [492f](#), [494](#); town/village relationships [194](#), [199](#)
cinnamon [108](#), [137](#)
cities and city-states [426](#), [506](#), [519](#), [529](#), [637](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [371–2](#), [373](#), [374](#), [375](#); China and [436](#), [438](#), [441](#); monuments [644](#), [646](#); oral traditions and chronicles [148](#), [149](#), [150](#), [152](#), [153](#); see also [settlement patterns](#); [stonetowns](#); [urbanism](#)
civilisation (uungwana) [77n6](#)
climate [19](#), [22–4](#)
cloves [356](#), [386](#), [525](#), [581](#), [586](#); slave trade [566](#), [567](#); Zanzibar [531](#), [533](#), [538](#), [585](#)
coastal erosion [25](#), [48](#)
coastal landscape [19–20](#); biodiversity [335](#), [336t](#), [337](#); climate [22–4](#); geology and physical features [28](#); oceanography and marine life [20](#), [21f](#), [22f](#); pre-Swahili [54–5](#); sea-level change [21](#), [24–5](#), [26f](#), [27f](#); soils [32](#); vegetation [29–30](#), [31f](#), [32](#)
coconut [110–11](#), [139](#), [270](#), [278](#); medieval Swahili [37](#), [38](#), [39](#); subsistence economies [353](#), [354](#), [357](#); villages [577](#), [581](#), [583f](#), [584](#), [585](#)
coffee [356](#), [525](#)
coinage and currencies [209f](#), [221](#), [232](#), [241](#), [256](#), [447](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [366](#), [370](#), [372](#); beads and bead-making [459](#); China [434](#), [438](#); historiography [60](#), [64](#);

international trade coins/local small change [452](#), [453f](#), [454–5](#); metals and metal-working [309](#), [311–12](#), [315](#), [327](#), [328–9](#), [330](#); origins of Swahili Age [139](#), [143](#), [144](#), [488](#), [489](#); Swahili coins [448](#), [449](#), [450](#); Zanzibar commercial hinterland [450–2](#); see also [craft production and industry](#)

coir rope [38](#)

colonialism [9–11](#), [24](#), [58–9](#), [108](#), [135](#), [197](#); agricultural production [242](#); archaeological research and [231–2](#); built environment [638–9](#), [647](#); Comoros [266](#); dhow trade [379–80](#); ethnic identification [67](#), [69](#), [70f](#), [71–2](#), [75](#); Europe [2](#); invention of ‘Africa’ [73](#); Mombasa [623–4](#); mosaics [410](#), [414](#); oral traditions and chronicles [147](#), [152](#), [153](#); plant resources [353](#), [356–7](#); rationing [571](#); slave trade [566](#), [567](#), [573](#); society and social composition [294](#), [301–2](#); stonetowns [589](#), [593–6](#), [597](#), [602](#); town planning [595–6](#), [639](#), [647](#); Zanzibar [245](#), [538f](#), [539](#)

Comorian (language) [74](#), [124](#), [125](#), [126](#), [167](#)

Comoros [7](#), [8](#), [11](#), [19](#), [186](#), [340](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [370](#), [373](#), [375](#); beads and bead-making [467–8](#); ceramics [397](#); chlorite schist [288](#); coastal landscape [25](#), [28](#), [30](#); early history [266–7](#), [268f](#), [269–74](#), [281](#), [282](#); eleventh to fourteenth-centuries [277](#), [278f](#), [279–83](#); Indian Ocean trade and communications [109](#), [110](#), [112](#), [269](#); Islam and Islamic culture [559](#); mosques [488](#); origins of Swahili Age [140](#), [142](#), [143](#); salt-works [524–5](#); socioeconomic and political networks [522](#); subsistence economies [336](#), [340–1](#), [343](#); town/village relationships [194](#), [201](#), [202](#); urbanism [187](#), [188](#), [194](#)

competitive/ritual feasting [234](#), [301](#), [341](#), [371](#), [408](#); ceramics [439](#), [440](#); inland entanglement [390](#), [395](#)

concubines (enslaved) [69](#), [570](#), [572](#)

conservation (archaeological) [58–9](#); diversity hotspots [29–30](#)

continental shelf system [20](#)

copper [37](#), [165f](#), [179](#), [308–9](#), [391](#), [434](#); coinage and currencies [448f](#), [449](#), [450](#), [454](#); craft production and industry [315](#), [325](#), [369](#), [619](#); historiography [58](#), [60](#), [64](#)

p.655

copyists (Islamic texts) [560](#)

coral (porites lutea) [8–9](#), [65](#), [143](#), [160](#), [280](#), [345](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [370](#); architecture [4](#), [36](#), [55](#), [143](#), [257](#), [325](#); coastal landscape and [21](#), [23](#), [24](#), [25](#), [28](#); craft production and industry [325](#), [329](#); medieval Swahili [37](#), [38](#), [39](#), [40](#), [45](#), [47–8](#); mosques [488](#), [489](#), [490](#), [493](#), [494](#); Pate [617](#), [618](#); Pemba Island [233](#), [234–5](#), [236](#); Shanga (Pate Island) [215](#), [216](#), [217f](#); stonetowns [500](#), [590](#), [644](#), [646](#); Swahili house [631](#), [632f](#), [633](#)

coral rag [8](#), [196](#), [235](#), [329](#), [345](#), [530](#)

cord materials [48](#)

cotton [200](#), [257](#), [270](#), [326](#), [327](#), [375](#); Indian Ocean trade and communications [107](#), [109](#), [113](#); Lamu [609](#); merikani/merekani (American unbleached cloth) [451](#), [452](#), [454](#); South Asia [422](#)

council system [75](#)

country-towns [196](#), [197](#)
cowpea [180](#)
cowries [112](#), [391](#), [524](#), [541](#); animal resources [341](#), [345](#); coinage and currencies [450](#), [452](#), [455](#); medieval period [37](#), [38](#)
craft production and industry [71](#), [74](#), [209](#), [298](#), [329f](#), [330–1](#); monuments [646–7](#); non-dietary uses of animal resources [345](#); villages [585](#); see also [beads and bead-making](#); [ceramics](#); [coinage](#); [iron and iron-working](#); [shell-working](#); [textiles](#)
creolisation see [mixed race ethnicity](#)
crop-processing [298–9](#), [583](#), [584](#)
Croucher, Sarah [232](#)
crown conchs [341](#)
crucible steel [314](#), [321](#), [421–2](#)
currencies see [coinage and currencies](#)
Cushitic (languages) [126](#), [127](#), [297](#), [340](#)
cyclones [23](#), [46](#)

Da Gama, Vasco [206](#), [210–11](#), [343](#), [500](#), [520](#), [622](#)
Daḥlān, Aḥmad Zaynī [560](#)
daka (reception area) [506](#), [530](#), [591](#)
Dakawa (Tanzania) [141f](#), [322](#), [391](#)
d’Almeida, Francisco (Portuguese commander) [623](#)
Dar es Salaam [141](#), [538](#), [584](#), [596](#), [648](#); historiography [59](#), [60](#)
Dar es Salaam, University of [188](#), [321](#), [392](#)
dates [525](#)
dating methods [63–5](#)
daub fragments [164](#), [166](#)
Dembeni (Comoros) [8](#), [109](#), [142](#), [288](#), [340](#), [370](#); beads and bead-making [467](#); excavations [269](#), [270](#), [273–4](#), [279–80](#), [283](#)
Department of Antiquities (Dar es Salaam) [648](#)
Description of the Barbarians of the Isles, The () (Wang Daguan [433](#))
detribalisation [69](#)
Deutsch, J.G. [567](#)
Dewar, R. [109](#)
Dhow Chasing in Zanzibar Waters (Colomb) [380](#)
Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean, The (Sheriff) [379](#)
dhow trade [378–9](#), [380f](#), [381–6](#), [435](#), [596](#); Lamu [602](#), [603f](#); villages [583–4](#), [585](#); see also [boats and ships](#)
dialects [124](#), [125t](#), [126f](#), [127](#)
dictionaries and grammars [57](#)
diffusion and migration theory [81](#)
Digo (dialect) [126](#)

DNA see [mitochondrial DNA \(mtDNA\)](#)
 documentation: part of historiography [53–4](#), [55](#), [56](#), [57–8](#)
 domed tombs [497](#)
 domesticated animals see [animal husbandry](#)
 Domoni (Comoros) [143](#), [201](#), [202](#), [488](#); excavations [272](#), [277](#), [280](#), [283](#)
 Dondo [496f](#)
 Donley-Reid, L.W. [150](#), [189](#), [297](#), [591](#)
 door-carving tradition [644](#), [645](#); Pate [618](#), [619](#); Swahili house [504](#), [506](#), [507f](#); Zanzibar [530](#), [532f](#), [533](#), [535](#), [539](#)
 drug abuse [607](#), [611](#)
 dry-stone construction [408–9](#)
 Duarte, R. [48](#), [188](#)
 dugong [37](#)
 Dusun stoneware [166](#), [479](#), [480f](#)
 Dutch East India Company [208](#), [211](#)

EACC see [East African Coastal Current](#)
 Early Holocene period [25](#), [26](#), [27](#), [32](#), [409](#)
 Early Iron Age (EIA) [xxvii](#), [6](#), [113](#), [188](#), [642](#); Indian Ocean trade and communications [337](#); Mafia Archipelago [247](#); Mtambwe Mkuu [232](#); origins of Swahili Age [106](#), [107](#), [138](#), [139](#), [140](#), [206](#); subsistence economies [337](#), [338–9t](#), [340](#)
 Early Iron-Working (EIW) [xxvii–xxviii](#), [312](#), [313–14](#), [315](#), [316](#), [409](#)
 Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast (Garlake) [487](#)
 Early Tana Tradition/Triangular-Incised Ware (ETT/TIW) [xxviii](#), [7](#), [177](#), [210](#), [301](#), [309](#);
 Afro-Eurasian world system [369](#); craft production and industry [324–5](#); Dakawa
 (Tanzania) [322](#); Mtambwe Mkuu [232](#); Pate [617](#); Pemba Island [163](#), [164](#), [165f](#), [166](#), [167](#),
 [235](#); shell-working [323](#), [324f](#); Zanzibar [240](#); see also [ceramics](#); [Tana](#)
 [Tradition/Triangular-Incised Ware \(TT/TIW\)](#)
 earthen houses [195](#), [205](#), [549](#), [593](#), [596](#); characteristics of [509](#), [510f](#), [511](#); Pate [616](#); Pemba
 Island [231](#), [234](#); Tumbe/Kimimba [164](#), [166](#), [167](#); Zanzibar [530](#), [531](#), [537](#), [539](#); see also
 [hawali houses \(India\)](#); [Omani-style houses \(beyt\)](#); [stone houses](#); [Swahili house](#); [timber](#)
 [and daub houses](#)
 East African Coastal Current (EACC) [20](#)
 East India Company [454](#)

Eastman, C.M. [70](#), [72](#), [296](#)
 eggshell ware [178](#), [227](#)
 Egypt [6–7](#), [137](#), [382](#), [561](#), [563](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [370](#), [371](#), [374](#); beads and bead-
 making [460](#), [462](#)
 EIA see [Early Iron Age](#)

EIW see [Early Iron-Working](#)
elephants [111](#), [173](#), [179](#), [424f](#), [643](#); China [430](#), [432](#)
Elwana (Ilwana/Malakote) (dialect) [74](#), [77n6](#), [124](#), [126](#)
Emozaydy tradition (Barros) [152](#)
*ene (head of lineage) [73–4](#), [77n4–5](#)
ENSO see El Niño–Southern Oscillation
environmental issues: anthropogenic shaping of ecologies by trade [110–11](#)
erosion see [coastal erosion](#)
Estado da Índia [520](#), [522](#)
ethnic identification [67–8](#), [76n1](#), [135](#), [301–2](#), [581–2](#); affiliating as Swahili [68–9](#); collective identity [147](#); ethnicising the Swahili [69](#), [70f](#), [71](#); identity categories [73–5](#), [76t](#); mixed race [71–3](#); mosaics [404](#), [405](#), [406](#); slave trade [67](#), [68–9](#), [70](#), [72](#), [570–2](#); Swahili house [633–4](#), [639](#)
ETT/TIW see [Early Tana Tradition/Triangular-Incised Ware](#)
Europe [2](#), [9–11](#), [210](#), [385](#), [638–9](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [373](#), [375](#); beads and bead-making [466](#), [468–9](#), [548](#), [550](#); ethnic identification [69](#), [71f](#), [72](#); historiography [56](#), [57](#), [68](#); stonetowns [594](#), [597](#)
excavation methods see [archaeological research](#)
exported goods [7](#), [8](#), [37](#), [39](#), [108](#), [138](#)
eye-witness accounts [6–7](#), [8](#), [37](#), [39](#), [54](#), [55](#); see also [oral traditions and chronicles](#)

Fair, L.J. [72](#)
Fakhr ad Din mosque (Mogadishu) [491](#)
Fanchang wares (China) [435](#)
farming see [agricultural economy](#)
Faza [520](#), [614](#)
Fernandez-Armesto, Felipe [378](#)
Festival of the Dhow Countries (ZIFF) [599](#)
fieldhouses [199](#)
fish and fishing [106](#), [198](#), [202](#), [298](#), [316](#), [383](#); coastal landscape and [20](#), [21](#), [22](#), [24](#), [32](#); Comoros [270](#), [273](#), [343](#); fish consumption [214](#), [217](#), [240](#); Kenya [609](#), [621](#); ocean fringe [37](#), [38f](#), [43](#), [45](#), [46](#), [48](#); origins of Swahili Age [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [139](#), [141](#), [643](#); Songo Mnara [257](#); subsistence economies [337](#), [340–1](#); villages [577](#), [583](#), [585](#); see also [hunting and foraging](#); [marine resources](#)
fish-drying [38](#), [43](#)
fish-trap fences [37](#), [38f](#), [139](#)
Fitzgerald, W.W.A. [617](#)
Flacourt, E. de [289](#), [290n1](#)
Fleisher, J.B. [188](#), [234](#), [301](#), [341](#), [390](#); buildings [510](#), [591–2](#); craft production and industry [309](#), [328](#); ethnic identification [73](#), [75](#); Tumbé/Kimimba [164](#), [167](#), [325](#); see also Flexner, J. et al. (2008)

food resources see [animal husbandry](#); [fish and fishing](#); [hunting and foraging](#); [marine resources](#)

football [580](#), [581f](#)

foraging see [hunting and foraging](#)

foreign trade [1](#), [5](#), [7](#), [8](#), [73](#), [135](#); Zanzibar [240–1](#)

foreshore industrial islets [43–4](#), [45f](#)

forestry and woodlands [175](#), [351](#), [354](#), [356](#); coastal landscape [19](#), [24](#), [29–30](#)

Forodhani (Zanzibar) [242](#)

Fort of Anchorage (Round Fort) (Mombasa) [623](#)

Fort Jesus (Mombasa) [9](#), [57](#), [136](#), [211](#), [242](#), [296](#); history of [622f](#), [623](#), [625](#); socioeconomic and political networks [521](#), [522](#)

Fort Saint Joseph (Mombasa) [623](#), [624](#)

forts [54](#), [375](#), [408–9](#), [546](#), [548](#), [606](#); Mahilaka [285t](#), [286](#), [287](#); Mombasa [623](#), [624](#); see also [monuments](#)

foundation myths [152–3](#)

France [11](#), [57](#), [266](#), [385](#), [594](#)

Freeman–Grenville, G.S.P. [64](#), [149](#), [448](#), [450](#)

Frere, Sir Bartle [625](#)

Freretown (Mombasa) [625](#), [626](#)

Friday mosques see [ijumaa \(Friday mosques\)](#)

Fujian ware (China) [438](#), [439](#), [440](#), [480f](#)

Fukuchani (Zanzibar) [139](#), [141](#), [240](#), [241](#), [479](#)

Fuller, D. [189](#)

Fumba [240](#)

Galu [314](#)

game animals [336](#), [344](#)

Gantang () [433](#)

garden cultivation [270–1](#)

Garlake, Margaret [385](#)

Garlake, Peter [65](#), [66](#), [232](#), [385](#); architectural style [487](#), [492](#), [497](#)

Gavana (Mombasa) [622](#)

Gede [136](#), [205](#), [208](#), [211](#), [385](#), [494](#); excavations [220](#), [221f](#), [222f](#), [223](#), [224t](#), [225](#); glazed wares [224t](#), [227](#), [228](#); historiography [58](#), [59](#), [63](#); houses [500](#), [501f](#), [502](#), [504f](#), [505](#); see also [Kenya](#); [Malindi](#); [Mambrui](#); [Mtwapa](#)

genetic ancestry research [81](#), [96–8](#), [109](#), [267](#); dialects [126t](#); materials and methods [82](#), [83f](#), [84–8t](#); results [89t](#), [90t](#), [91t](#), [92f](#), [93f](#), [94f](#), [95f](#)

geography see [coastal landscape](#)

Geography (Ptolemy) [54](#), [105](#), [240](#), [366](#), [643](#); origins of Swahili Age [138](#), [139](#)

Geography of the World (al-Idrisi) [620](#)

geology and physical features [28](#)

German East Africa see [Tanzania](#)

German East Africa Company [567–8](#)

Germany [9–10](#), [58](#), [356](#), [454](#), [567](#), [638](#); Mafia Archipelago [245](#), [247](#), [577](#)

Gezira (Somalia) [142](#)

p.657

Ghaidan, Usam [591](#), [616](#), [648](#)

Ghosh, Amitav [381](#)

Gilbert, E. [379](#)

Giriama people [571–2](#)

Glassman, J. [72](#), [301](#), [569](#), [571](#)

glassware [263](#), [366](#), [459](#), [469](#), [550](#); Chibuene [175](#), [176](#), [178](#), [179](#), [180](#); China [434](#); coinage and currencies [451](#), [452](#); Comoros [467–8](#); Gede [227](#); inland entanglement [391](#), [397](#); Kilwa Kisiwani [463](#), [464t](#), [465t](#), [466](#); Kilwa-Nyasa caravan route [548](#), [549](#); Madagascar [288](#), [289](#), [468](#); Mambrai/Malindi (Kenya) [206](#), [210](#); Manda (Lamu Archipelago) [160](#), [462–3](#), [465](#); mosaics [410](#); origins of Swahili Age [138](#), [141](#); Pemba [163](#), [164](#), [166](#), [167](#); Shanga [461–2](#), [465](#); Songo Mnara [466](#), [467f](#); town/village relationships [195](#), [200](#); Tumbe [463](#); Unguja Ukuu [171](#), [172f](#), [173](#), [458](#), [459](#), [460f](#), [461f](#), [465](#); Zanzibar [240](#); see also [imported goods](#)

glazed wares [107](#), [424f](#), [441](#); Chibuene [178](#), [179](#); China [139](#), [435](#), [441](#); excavations [211](#), [228](#), [241](#), [274](#), [281](#); long-distance exchange [421](#), [423](#), [424f](#), [426](#), [473f](#), [479](#); origins of Swahili Age [138](#), [140](#), [142](#)

goats [336](#)

Gokomere/Ziwa ceramic tradition [177](#)

gold [65](#), [156](#), [178–9](#), [241](#), [288](#), [419](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [369](#), [370](#), [372](#), [373](#), [375](#); cities and city-states [644](#); coinage and currencies [449](#); dhow trade [384](#), [385](#); Kilwa Kisiwani/Songo Mnara [256](#), [258](#); medieval period [46](#), [55](#); metals and metal-working [307–8](#), [315](#); socioeconomic and political networks [519](#), [520](#); South Asia [423](#)

Gonja Maore [343](#), [397](#)

Government of Sweden [169](#)

grains [447](#), [566](#)

grassland [29](#), [30](#), [31](#), [351](#)

grave sites [577](#), [579](#)

gravitational tides [20](#), [21](#)

Great Friday Mosque (Gede) [220](#), [221](#), [222f](#), [223](#), [225n1](#)

Great Mosque (Kilwa Kisiwani) [253](#), [255f](#), [256](#), [385](#), [491](#); Afro-Eurasian world-system [373](#), [374](#); historiography [55](#), [57](#), [63](#), [65](#)

Great Zimbabwe [372](#), [375](#), [440](#), [449](#), [465](#)

Graeco-Roman Empire [60](#), [240](#), [366–7](#), [381](#), [459](#); China and [430](#); origins of Swahili Age [137](#), [138](#), [139](#); Unguja Ukuu [171](#), [173](#)

grinders (bead) [39](#), [113](#), [160](#), [227](#), [240](#), [298](#); Pemba [164](#), [166](#), [167](#); shell-making [323](#),

[324f](#); Unguja Ukuu [172](#)
Grottanelli, V.L. [152](#)
Guangdong Province (China) [435](#), [436](#), [438](#)
Guangzhou Xicun (China) [210](#), [435](#)
Gudulia ware [159](#)
Guillain, Charles [453](#), [537](#)
guinea fowl [107](#)
Gujarat (India) [518](#), [519](#), [520](#), [522](#), [524](#), [535](#)
Gulf wares [178](#)
gum copal [137](#), [289](#), [290n1](#), [369](#), [370](#)

Hadimu people [76n1](#), [242](#), [294](#)
Hadramawt [518](#), [523](#), [557](#), [559](#)
Hadrami (Ḥaḍramī) people [374](#), [536](#), [558–60](#), [561](#), [608](#)
half-caste see [mixed race ethnicity](#)
Hamamni baths (Zanzibar) [598](#)
Hamed bin Muhammed el Murjebi (Tippu Tip) (caravan trader) [543](#)
hamlets [6](#), [196](#), [199](#)
hando-shaped pottery (India) [171](#), [173](#)
Hanyundru (Comoros) [277](#), [279](#), [281](#)
harbours see [ports and harbours](#)
Harun al-Rashid [150](#)
haweli houses (India) [535](#), see also [earthen houses](#); [Omani-style houses \(beyt\)](#); [stone houses](#); [Swahili house](#); [timber and daub houses](#)
Hebei Province (China) [436](#)
Helm, R. [190](#)
heshima (honour and respectful behaviour) [571](#), [608](#), [610](#)
Hichens, W. [148](#), [151](#)
Hindus [535](#)
Hinnebusch, T. [77n2–3](#), [124](#), [125](#), [126](#), [127](#)
hinterland [3](#), [5](#), [113](#), [296](#); environment and historiography [29–30](#), [36](#), [57](#), [62](#); ethnic identification [68](#), [69](#), [72](#), [73](#); metals and metal-working [309](#); town/village relationships [194](#), [197](#), [198–9](#); see also [inland entanglement](#)
hippopotamus [340](#), [541](#)
historical texts see [documentation](#)
historiography [53–4](#); colonialism [58–9](#); dating by architectural style/Islamic reference [63–5](#); medieval Islamic world [55](#); Portuguese dominance [56–8](#); post-colonialism [59–61](#); post-pioneer archaeology [65–6](#); pre-Swahili coast [54–5](#); recognition of Swahili world [61f](#), [62f](#), [63](#)
History and Archaeology in East Africa, British Institute for [59–60](#), [137](#); see also [British Institute in Eastern Africa](#)

History of Kilwa [135](#), [214](#)
History of the Later Han Dynasty, The (Zhonghua shuju) [430](#)
History of Pate [214](#)
History of the Song Dynasty, The (Zhonghua shuju) [433](#)
Hobley, C.W. [407](#)
Hobyoy grassland and shrubland [29](#)
hole-mouth jars [142](#), [143](#)
Hollis, A.C. [148](#), [150](#)
Holocene period [20](#), [24](#), [340](#), [403](#)
Horseshoe Fort (Mombasa) [623](#), [624](#)
Horton, M. [xxviii](#), [61](#), [158](#), [169](#), [322](#), [384](#); beads and bead-making [462](#); craft production and industry [328](#), [330](#), [369](#), [371](#); ethnic identification [72](#), [74](#); Ras Mkumbuu [232](#), [233](#); Shanga [297](#), [298](#); town/village relationships [195](#), [197](#); urbanism [186](#), [188](#), [590](#)

p.658

House of the Cistern (Gede) [504f](#)
House of Cowries (Gede) [502](#), [503f](#)
House of the Dhow (Gede) [502](#)
House of the Double Court (Gede) [503f](#)
house mouse (*Mus musculus*) [111](#)
House of the Panelled Walls (Gede) [503](#)
House of the Portico (Kilwa Island) [257](#)
House of the Sunken Court (Gede) [503](#)
House of Wonders (Zanzibar) [530](#), [535](#), [536f](#), [539](#)
houses see [earthen houses](#); [haweli houses \(India\)](#); [Omani-style houses \(beyt\)](#); [stone houses](#); [Swahili house](#); [timber and daub houses](#)
hunting and foraging [81](#), [112](#), [269](#), [298](#), [397](#), [621](#); animal resources [335](#), [336](#), [337](#), [340](#); mosaics [406](#), [410](#); residential sites [406–7](#); see also [fish and fishing](#)
Husuni Kubwa Palace (Kilwa Island) [46](#), [373](#), [465](#), [487](#), [491](#); dhow trade [384](#), [385](#); excavations [253](#), [254](#), [256](#); historiography [55](#), [63](#), [65](#)
hut tombs [497](#)
hydrographic zones [20](#)

Ibadi (Ibādī) people [233](#), [374](#), [533](#), [557](#), [561](#); architectural style [492](#), [494](#)
IBEAC see [Imperial British East Africa Company](#)
Ibn al-Mujâwir [373](#)
Ibn Battuta, Muhammad [241](#), [295](#), [373](#), [384](#), [643](#); craft production and industry [327](#), [337](#); houses [505](#), [509](#); Islam and Islamic culture [558](#); Mombasa [620](#), [621](#), [648](#); origins of Swahili Age [8](#), [39](#), [55](#), [68](#), [491](#)
Ibn Hawqal, Muhammad [39](#)
Ibn Khaldun [643](#)

Ibn Rusteh [370](#)

Ibn Sa'id [67](#)

identity see [ethnic identification](#); [social identity and belonging](#)

ijazas (spiritual certificates) [562](#)

ijumaa (Friday mosques) [491](#); Chwaka [494](#); Gede [220](#), [221](#), [222f](#), [223](#), [225n1](#), [494](#); Pate [615](#), [617](#), [618](#); Ras Mkumbuu [490](#); Shanga [216f](#), [217f](#), [225n1](#), [489](#); Tumbatu [490f](#); Zanzibar [241](#), [530](#)

Ikoti (dialect) [126–7](#)

Iliffe, J. [541](#), [543](#), [544](#)

Imams of Muscat [245](#)

Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) [566](#), [573](#)

imperialism see [colonialism](#)

imported goods [7](#), [8](#), [60](#), [75](#), [299](#), [378](#); Chibuene [178](#), [179](#); Comoros [269](#), [274](#), [282](#); dhow trade [382](#); Gede [221](#), [224t](#); Indian Ocean trade and communications [107](#), [108](#), [113](#); Kilwa Island [256](#), [257](#); Madagascar [287](#); Mambrui [207](#); metals and metal-working [309](#), [311](#); Mikindani (Mtwara) and Southern Coast [262](#), [263](#); origins of Swahili Age [136](#), [138](#), [141](#), [142](#), [143](#); Pemba Island [166](#), [167](#), [236](#); Shanga (Pate Island) [218](#); textiles [326](#), [327](#); town/village relationships [197](#), [200](#); Unguja Ukuu [171](#), [172f](#), [174](#); Zanzibar (Unguja) [240](#), [241](#); see also [long-distance exchange](#)

INA see [Institute of Nautical Archaeology](#)

incense [430](#), [433](#)

India [7](#), [10](#), [81](#), [141](#), [187](#), [195](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [368](#), [371](#), [372](#), [375](#); beads and bead-making [228](#), [458](#), [464](#), [466](#); ceramics [210](#), [227](#), [264](#); coinage and currencies [454–5](#); glassware [240](#); historiography [60](#), [61](#); Manda [159–60](#); socioeconomic and political networks [519](#), [524](#); text circulation [561](#); textiles [326](#), [327](#), [451](#), [518](#), [519](#); Unguja Ukuu [172](#), [173](#); Zanzibar [535](#), [538](#), [543](#), [594](#)

Indian Monsoon Current [20](#)

Indian Ocean world system [7](#), [8](#), [148](#), [153](#), [175](#), [454](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [365](#), [374](#); anthropogenic shaping of ecologies [110–11](#); beads and bead-making [458–9](#), [460f](#), [462–3](#), [464t](#), [465t](#), [466](#), [467f](#), [468–9](#); China [431](#), [465t](#); Comoros [279](#), [282](#); craft production and industry [319–20](#), [331](#); dhow trade [378](#), [379](#), [383](#), [384](#), [386](#); dipole (IOD)/zonal mode (IOZM) [23](#); early commercial trade [105–6](#), [137](#); environment and historiography [27](#), [36](#), [57](#), [61](#); evidence of long-distance connections [107–10](#); exchange of animal/plant resources [345–6](#), [353](#); inland entanglement [392](#), [393](#); Kilwa Island/Songo Mnara Island [258](#); Kilwa-Nyasa caravan route [542](#); long-distance exchange [472](#), [473f](#), [474](#), [475t](#); Madagascar [187](#), [287](#), [288](#); Mikindani (Mtwara) and Southern Coast [262](#), [263–4](#); mosaics [403](#), [410](#), [411–14t](#); role of small-scale communities [112](#); slave trade [111–12](#); society and social composition [295](#), [302](#); South Asia [419](#), [420f](#), [421–3](#), [424f](#), [425–7](#); stonetowns [596](#); town/village relationships [195](#), [198](#); trade production [112–14](#); volume of ceramic exchange [476–7](#), [478t&f](#), [479f](#), [480f](#), [481f](#), [482](#); Zanzibar [240–1](#)

Indicopleustes, Cosmas (merchant and traveller) [307](#)
indigo dye [232](#), [327](#), [541](#)
Indonesia [7](#), [109](#)
industrial activity [43–4](#), [45f](#)
Ingrams, W.H. [344](#)
Inhambane coastal forest [19](#), [29–30](#)
inland entanglement: evidence and trends [391–2](#); Tanzania [388](#), [392–3](#), [394f](#), [395f](#), [396f](#), [397f](#), [398](#); urban/rural interconnectivity [389–90](#); see also [hinterland](#); [mosaics](#)
Institute of Nautical Archaeology (INA) [623](#), [624](#)

p.659

‘interior’ see [hinterland](#)
Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) [23](#)
Iran [81](#), [98](#), [460](#), [474](#)
Iraq [8](#), [111](#), [311](#), [369](#), [460](#), [473f](#)
Irodo [142](#)
Iron Age [xxvii](#), [6](#), [11](#), [262](#), [354](#)
iron and iron-working [xxvii–xxviii](#), [73](#), [110](#), [201](#), [366](#), [373](#); China [433](#), [441](#); coinage and currencies [450](#), [455](#); inland entanglement [391](#), [397](#); medieval period [40](#), [43](#), [44](#); mixed farming [6–7](#), [352](#); mosaics [408](#), [414](#); nails [315](#), [316](#), [382](#), [386](#); origins of Swahili Age [141](#), [142](#), [153](#), [158](#); resource exploitation [37](#), [156](#); society and social composition [298](#), [300](#); South Asia [421](#), [423](#), [425](#); technological periods [312f](#), [313–15](#); **sites**: Comoros [270](#), [277](#), [279](#); Gede [224](#), [227](#), [228](#); Madagascar [288](#); Mambrui (Kenya) [206](#), [207–8](#); Mikindani (Mtwara) and Southern Coast [261](#); Mombasa [621](#); Pemba Island [166](#), [167](#); Zanzibar [240](#); see also [craft production and industry](#)
Ishakani (Lamu) [495](#), [645f](#)
Islam and Islamic culture [2](#), [3](#), [8](#), [9](#), [11](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [368](#), [371](#), [372](#), [373](#), [374](#); beads and bead-making [459](#); built environment [637](#); burials [143](#), [173](#), [176](#), [179](#); China [431–2](#), [435](#), [436](#), [440](#); coinage and currencies [328](#), [448](#), [450](#); Comoros [267](#), [270](#), [273](#), [274](#), [277](#), [287](#); dhow trade [383](#); emergence of Swahili towns/cities [135](#), [142](#), [143–4](#), [149](#), [153](#); ethnic identification [68–9](#), [71–2](#), [73](#), [77n3](#); Gede [222](#); glassware [178](#); Hadrami (Ḥaḍramī) migration and Sufism [557](#), [558–60](#); historiography [61](#), [64](#), [65](#); inland entanglement [389](#); Lamu [603f](#), [606](#); madrasa (Koran schools) [579](#), [582](#), [586](#); marriage [637](#); medieval period [55](#); Mikindani (Mtwara) and Southern Coast [262](#), [264](#); Ras Mkumbuu [233](#); Shanga (Pate Island) [217](#); slave trade [574](#); social identity and belonging [608–9](#); society and social composition [299](#), [302](#); socioeconomic and political networks [518](#), [521](#); South Asia [421](#), [423](#), [424f](#), [425](#); text circulation [559](#), [560–2](#); town/village relationships [199](#); travel and knowledge [562–4](#); urbanism [530](#); villages [582–3](#), [587](#); ‘war on terror’ [639](#); see also [Arabs and Arabic people](#)
Islamic ceramics [39](#), [62](#), [107](#), [142](#), [159](#), [241](#); Kilwa Island [257](#); Mambrui/Malindi (Kenya) [206](#), [207](#), [208](#), [210](#), [211](#); see also [ceramics](#)

ITCZ see [Intertropical Convergence Zone](#)

ivory [7](#), [156](#), [198](#), [228](#), [300](#), [345](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [366](#), [369](#), [370](#), [375](#); caravan trade [357](#), [451](#); China [433](#); dhow trade [382](#), [384](#), [385](#); Indian Ocean trade and communications [105](#), [108](#), [111](#), [112](#), [113](#), [463](#); inland entanglement [390](#), [398](#); Kilwa-Nyasa caravan route [541](#), [542–3](#), [545](#), [546](#), [551](#); mosaics [408](#), [410](#); origins of Swahili Age [54](#), [59](#), [137](#), [138](#), [142](#); socioeconomic and political networks [520](#), [522](#), [524](#), [525](#); South Asia [419](#), [423](#), [425](#), [426](#); Zanzibar [242](#)

Jama, A.D. [186](#)

jewellery [309](#), [315](#), [325](#), [329](#)

Jingdezhen ware (China) [440](#)

Jiwe Jemedari [206](#)

journals and newspapers [560](#), [561](#), [562](#)

Juani Island [107](#)

Juani Primary School [139](#), [247](#), [248f](#), [340](#); Indian Ocean trade and communications [106](#), [112](#), [113](#)

Juma, A. [188](#), [459](#), [462](#)

Jumba la Mtwara (Mombasa) [136](#)

juya nets [37](#)

kabila (tribes) [75–6](#)

Kaliwa (Chwaka) [199](#), [202](#), [355](#)

Kamba people [398](#)

Kanbalu (Pemba) [142](#); see also [Qanbalu](#)

Kanga [577](#), [579](#), [580f](#), [581f](#); see also [Mafia Archipelago](#)

Kanungo, A.K. [464](#)

Kaole Ruins [43](#), [466](#), [494](#)

Karagwe [310](#)

Karthala (volcano) (Comoros) [268](#), [269](#)

Kasigau (Kenya) [408](#), [410](#), [414](#)

Kaskazi (monsoon period) [22](#), [23](#)

‘kayas’ (protected sacred groves) [30](#), [187](#), [189](#), [215](#), [297](#)

Kenya [8](#), [10](#), [11](#), [187](#), [299](#), [357](#); architectural style [487](#); ceramics [325](#); China [434](#); ‘coast’ movement [70–1](#), [569](#), [609](#); coastal landscape [20](#), [29](#), [403](#), [406–10](#); coinage and currencies [455](#); ethnic identification [69](#), [70](#), [73](#), [76n1](#), [639](#); historiography [58](#), [61](#), [63](#); inland entanglement [392](#); Lamu and [603](#), [609–10](#), [611](#); metals and metal-working [310](#), [312f](#), [321](#), [322](#), [330](#), [408](#); monuments [647](#); mosques [489](#); slave trade [566](#), [568](#), [569](#), [572–3](#), [637–8](#); town/village relationships [196](#), [198](#); see also [Gede](#); [Malindi](#); [Mambrui](#); [Mtwapa](#)

Kenyatta, Jomo [568](#), [609](#)

Khabar al-Lamu (Hitchens trans.) [151](#)

Khami Indo-Pacific bead series [178](#)

Khatibu Mosque [206](#)
kiAmu (language) [136](#)
Kibiti [140](#)
Kigozi (poet) [136](#)
Kikole (Songea) [549t](#), [550f](#)
Kikuyu people [609](#), [611](#)
Kilepwa [205](#), [206](#)
Kilindini [75](#), [146](#), [622](#), [623](#)
Kilindoni (Mafia Archipelago) [247](#)
Kilwa Chronicle [148](#), [150](#), [154n1](#), [253](#), [256](#); archaeological research and [55](#), [56–7](#), [58](#), [60](#), [64](#)

p.660

Kilwa Island [9](#), [161](#), [188](#), [236](#), [245](#), [329](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [372](#), [373](#), [374](#), [375](#); architectural style [487](#), [488](#); buildings [504](#), [509](#), [593](#); dhow trade [384](#), [385](#); excavations [136](#), [139](#), [186](#), [188](#), [355](#); historiography [58](#), [59](#), [60](#), [61](#), [63](#), [65](#); Islam and Islamic culture [558](#); metals and metal-working [307](#), [309](#), [310](#), [328](#); oral traditions and chronicles [150](#), [151](#); socioeconomic and political networks [517](#), [518](#), [519](#), [522](#); town/village relationships [194](#), [195](#), [202](#); Yemen [372](#); see also [Songo Mnara](#); [Tanzania](#)
Kilwa Kisiwani [4](#), [142](#), [194](#), [287](#), [436](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [373](#), [374](#); beads and bead-making [463](#), [464t](#), [465t](#), [466](#); coinage and currencies [448f](#), [449](#), [453](#); conservation [644](#), [648](#); excavations [253](#), [254f](#), [255f](#), [256–7](#), [258](#); historiography [55](#), [56](#), [57](#), [59](#), [61f](#), [63](#), [65](#); Kilwa-Nyasa caravan route [543](#); medieval period [42](#), [43](#), [45–6](#); metals and metal-working [308](#), [311](#), [312](#), [314](#); mihrabs [494](#); mosques [385](#), [490](#), [491](#); slave trade [545](#); town/village relationships [194](#), [200](#); see also [Songo Mnara](#); [Tanzania](#)
Kilwa Kivinje [541](#), [543–4](#), [545t](#), [547–8](#)
Kilwa-Nyasa caravan route [541–3](#), [544f](#), [545t](#), [546](#), [551–2](#); midrib of route [546–7](#), [548t](#), [549t](#), [550f](#), see also [caravan trade](#)
Kimimba [163](#), [165–6](#), [326](#); see also [Bandarikuu](#); [Pemba](#); [Tumbe](#)
kiMvita (language) [136](#)
kinyago (funerary dance) [571–2](#)
Kirimba Islands [327](#)
Kirkman, James [205](#), [211](#), [647](#); Gede [220](#), [221f](#), [222f](#), [502](#), [503f](#); historiography [58–9](#), [60](#), [61](#), [63](#); Ras Mkumbuu [232](#)
Kirongwé (Kenya) [408](#)
Kisiju [308](#)
Kisimani Mafia (Mafia Archipelago) [25](#), [248](#), [294](#), [490](#)
Kisio Rock (Kenya) [408](#)
Kisongo [47f](#)
Kiswahili (language) [67](#), [68](#), [69](#), [71](#), [72](#), [611](#); ethnic identification categories [74](#), [75](#), [76](#)
Kiswere [37](#), [38f](#), [43](#), [47f](#)

Kitab al-Zunuj (Cerulli trans.) [151](#), [154n7](#)
Kitokwe/Kichokwe (Pate) [615f](#), [616](#)
Kivinja [138](#)
Kizimkazi (Zanzibar) [240](#), [242](#), [489f](#), [492–3](#), [494](#)
Knappert, J. [152](#)
Knudstad, James [277](#)
kohl sticks [309](#), [310f](#), [315](#)
Koma [139](#)
Kongou (Comoros) [270](#)
Koplin, Lynn [223](#), [224t](#), [225](#)
Krapf, Ludwig [454](#)
Kua (Mafia Archipelago) [245](#), [248](#), [251](#), [294](#), [494](#)
Kua Tradition – Mafia Island (Velten collection) [151](#)
Kus, S. [189](#), [277](#)
Kush (Kennet) [474](#)
Kusi (southerly winds) [23](#)
Kusimba, C.M. [196](#), [197](#), [296](#), [322](#); et al. (1994) [321](#), [323](#); et al. (2013) [199](#), [315](#)
Kusimba, S.B. see [Kusimba, C.M. et al. \(2013\)](#)
kutanda dagaa (fishing nets) [37](#), [38](#)
Kuumbi Cave (Panga ya Kuumbi) (Zanzibar) [239](#), [337](#)
kuzingua mji (‘encircling the village’) [580](#), [582](#)
Kwa Mgogo (Tanzania) [390](#), [394f](#), [395](#), [397](#)
Kwale ceramics [6](#), [7](#), [106](#), [139](#), [240](#), [262](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [366](#), [368](#); Early Iron Age (EIA) [642](#); Limbo [313](#); Saghasa [314](#); Unguja Ukuu [170](#), [173](#)
Kwale-Matola-Silver Leaves [177](#)
Kwekason, Amandus [260](#)

Lamu [5](#), [7](#), [68](#), [453](#), [521](#), [644](#)
Lamu: A Study in Conservation (Ghaidan) [648](#)
Lamu: Kenya’s Enchanted Island (Abungu and Abungu) [645](#)
Lamu: Afro-Eurasian world system [368](#), [371](#), [372](#); built environment [638](#); contemporary town life [605f](#), [606–10](#); dhow trade [386](#); Islam and Islamic culture [561](#); maps [xxiii](#); monuments [644](#), [645f](#), [647](#); moral dispossession [610–12](#); origins of Swahili Age [142](#), [150](#), [151](#); pillar tombs [496](#); slave trade [567](#); social identity and belonging [602](#), [603f](#), [604f](#); society and social composition [294](#), [295](#), [296](#), [297](#); stonetowns [591](#), [592–3](#), [598](#), [644](#); Swahili houses [510](#); tombs [495](#), [645f](#); town/village relationships [194](#), [195](#), [196](#), [197](#), [198](#), [202](#); World Heritage status [589](#); Zanzibar [530](#); see also [Manda](#); [Pate](#); [Shanga](#)
Lamu Chronicle [148](#)
Lamu Port-Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor Project (LAPSSET) [599](#)
Lanchester, H.V. [537](#), [538](#)
land ownership/tenure [149](#), [154n2](#), [293](#), [294](#)

Land Titles Ordinances (1908) [568](#)

Lands and Settlement, Ministry of (Kenya) [647](#)

Lane, P. [190](#)

Langoni quarter see [Lamu](#)

language and linguistics [xxvii](#), [2](#), [3](#), [10](#), [140](#), [337](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [368](#), [369](#);
 Arabic language [54](#), [56](#), [57](#), [136](#); Comoros [266–7](#); development of dialects [124](#), [125t](#),
[126f](#), [127](#); Indian Ocean trade and communications [108](#), [109](#), [110](#), [353](#); Islam and
 Islamic culture [557](#); Kiswahili [67](#), [68](#), [69](#), [71](#), [77n4](#); Lamu [603](#), [604](#), [607](#); lexical and
 cultural domains [127–8](#); mosaics [404](#), [405](#), [415](#); origins of Swahili [121–2](#), [123f](#), [124](#);
 society and social composition [294](#), [297](#); socioeconomic and political networks [525](#)

p.661

LAPSSET see [Lamu Port-Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor Project](#)

Last Glacial Maximum (LGM) [25](#), [239](#)

Last, J.T. (British Slavery Commissioner, Pemba) [567](#)

Late Holocene period [24](#), [26](#)

Late Iron Age [xxvii](#), [199](#)

Late Iron-Working [xxviii](#), [313](#), [314–15](#), [409–10](#)

Late Stone Age (LSA) [11](#), [32](#), [107](#), [261](#); subsistence economies [337](#), [338–9t](#), [340](#)

Later Stone Age (LSA) [106](#)

LaViolette, A. [73](#), [164](#), [302](#), [309](#), [510](#), [591–2](#)

lead [37](#), [311](#)

leather tanning [232](#), [257](#), [325](#), [326](#), [330](#), [391](#)

Leigh, John Studdy [537](#)

leopard [173](#)

Leverhulme Trust [137](#)

LGM see [Last Glacial Maximum](#)

Lilangangondo (Ruanda) [550](#)

Limbo (Tanzania); ceramics [37](#), [139](#), [325](#); metals and metal-working [306](#), [312](#), [313](#), [321](#)

lime-making [530](#), [590](#), [593](#), [617](#), [648](#); medieval period [43](#), [44](#), [45](#), [46](#), [47](#), [48](#); plaster
 facings [215](#), [325](#), [500](#), [509](#), [618](#); sites [41f](#), [42f](#), [176](#)

limestone [25](#), [28](#), [40](#)

Limpopo Valley [108](#), [179](#), [372](#), [440](#), [468](#)

linguistics see [language and linguistics](#)

Litunu, Mohammed (ivory trader) [549](#)

Livingstone, Dr David [547](#)

Loimeier, R. [73](#)

long-distance exchange [472](#), [473f](#), [474](#), [475t](#); volume of ceramic exchange [476–7](#), [478t&f](#),
[479f](#), [480f](#), [481f](#), [482](#); see also [imported goods](#)

Longquan wares (China) [439](#), [440](#); Mambrui/Malindi [207](#), [208](#), [209](#), [210](#), [211](#), [212](#)

Lukila Island [45–6](#)

*lukolo (clans) [74–5](#), [77n4–5](#), [215](#)

Lumbi (Zambesi River) [188](#)

Macamo, S. [188](#)

macroscopic plant remains [351](#), [356](#)

Madagascar [7](#), [11](#), [142](#), [180](#), [287](#), [289](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [370](#), [373](#), [375](#); animal resources [343](#); coastal landscape [28](#), [30–1](#); Comoros and [267](#), [268](#), [274](#), [282](#); excavations [285t](#), [286f](#), [287](#), [288t](#), [289](#), [468](#); origins of Swahili Age [108](#), [109](#), [112](#), [142](#), [143](#); socioeconomic and political networks [522](#), [524](#); subsistence economies [336](#), [340](#); urbanism [186](#), [187](#), [188](#)

Madiquida, H. [188](#)

madrassa (Koran schools) [579](#), [582](#), [586](#)

Mafia Archipelago [25](#), [48](#), [60](#), [106](#), [139](#), [189](#); China [436](#); coinage and currencies [449](#); excavations [245](#), [246t](#), [247](#), [248f](#), [249–50t](#), [251](#); marine resources [340](#); mihrabs [494](#); tourism [585](#); urbanism [294](#); see also [Kanga](#)

Mafia District Book [584](#)

Mafia Island Marine Park [577](#), [585](#)

Mafia Island tradition (Piggott translation) [151](#)

mafingo (buried pots) [505](#)

Maganbani [37](#)

Mahdali dynasty [55](#), [65](#), [256](#), [372](#)

Mahilaka (Madagascar) [285](#), [343](#), [468](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [370](#), [373](#); excavations [285t](#), [286f](#), [287](#), [288t](#), [289](#); origins of Swahili Age [142](#), [143](#); urbanism [186](#), [187](#)

maize [357](#)

majahazi see [dhow trade](#)

Majikavu (Comoros) [271](#), [279](#)

Makerere University [60](#)

Makhuwa (dialect) [127](#)

Makoba Bay [26](#)

Makonde people [127](#), [545](#)

makoo (descent groups) [579](#), [582](#)

Makunduchi village (Unguja Ukuu) [582](#)

Makutani (palace) [63](#), [65](#)

Malagasy (Austronesian language) [142](#)

Maldives [7](#), [26](#)

Malindi (Old Town) [8](#), [9](#), [68](#), [150](#), [496](#), [568](#); buildings [534f](#), [537](#); excavations [207f](#), [210–12](#); metals and metal-working [314](#), [315–16](#); socioeconomic and political networks [518](#), [520](#), [523](#), [525](#); see also [Gede](#); [Mambrui](#); [Mtwapa](#)

Mambrui [206](#), [207f](#), [208](#), [209f](#), [210](#), [496](#); see also [Gede](#); [Malindi](#); [Mtwapa](#)

Manda [8](#), [64](#), [161](#), [215](#), [287](#), [493f](#); archaeological site [156](#), [157f](#), [158](#), [186](#); artefacts [158–60](#), [329](#); beads and bead-making [462–3](#), [465](#); ceramics [475](#), [477](#), [479](#); metals and

metal-working [308](#), [309](#), [311](#), [314](#); origins of the Swahili Age [136](#), [142](#), [143](#), [144](#); see also [Lamu](#); [Pate Island](#); [Shanga](#)

Manda (Chittick) [215](#), [474](#)

manda (trade centres) [289](#)

mangrove whelk [341](#)

mangroves [45](#), [55](#), [111](#), [232](#), [609](#), [636](#); built environment and [500](#), [530](#), [592](#), [646](#); coastal landscape [24](#), [25](#), [26](#), [27f](#), [31–2](#); craft production and industry [320](#), [325](#); dhow trade [384–5](#), [386](#); resource exploitation [36–7](#), [38](#), [39](#), [43](#), [44](#), [198](#); species [40t](#)

Mang’ua [548t](#)

Manhal al-Wurrād (Aḥmad b. Sumayṭ) [561–2](#)

Mantai (Sri Lanka) [460](#), [469](#)

Manyiken (Zimbabwe) [179](#)

Maore (Comoros) [277](#), [282](#), [397](#), [467](#); early history [267](#), [268](#), [269](#), [270](#), [271](#), [273](#); settlement patterns [279–80](#)

mapanga (shrines) [583](#)

Mapunda, B. [xxviii](#), [548](#), [549](#)

Mapungubwe (Limpopo Valley) [179](#), [372](#), [440](#), [468](#)

Maramba (Tanzania) [139](#)

Maria Theresa (MT) thalers/dollars [453f](#), [454](#)

p.662

marine environment [20](#), [21f](#), [22f](#), [25](#), [26f](#)

marine resources [36–7](#), [74](#), [139](#), [175](#), [227](#), [240](#); hunting and foraging [336f](#), [340](#), [343](#); see also [fish and fishing](#)

maritime architecture [45–6](#), [47f](#)

maritime trade and activity see [Afro-Eurasian world system](#); [dhow trade](#); [Indian Ocean world system](#); [long-distance exchange](#)

Maritime Trade Bureaus (shibosi ()) (China) [433](#)

maritime and underwater cultural heritage sites [624](#)

marriage [69](#), [105](#), [113](#), [508](#), [591](#); ethnic identification [637](#), [640n1](#); oral traditions and chronicles [147](#), [153](#)

Marshall, L.W. [573](#)

masango (metal wires) [451](#)

Mascarene islands [11](#)

mashamba (gardens and plantations) [198](#)

masquerade culture [571–2](#)

Matalai (weather transition period) [23](#)

Mathew, G. [308](#)

Mayeur, Nicholas (French explorer) [286](#)

Mayotte (Comoros) [289](#), [340](#), [373](#), [467–8](#)

Mayr, Hans [42](#), [509](#)

Mazrui, Ali and Alamin [71](#), [72](#), [73](#)
Mazrui Arabs [234](#), [242](#), [356–7](#); Mombasa [522–3](#), [525](#), [623](#)
Mazwini (Comoros) [281](#)
M’Bachilé (Mbachilé/Mbashile) (Comoros) [187](#), [269](#), [273](#), [281](#)
Mbaraki mosque (Mombasa) [621–2](#), [626](#)
Mbegani Estuary (Bwembweni) [38](#)
M’Beni-Malé (Comoros) [281](#)
M’de (Comoros) [281](#)
medieval period [xxvii](#), [62](#); craft/construction/industry resources [38–9](#), [40t](#), [41f](#), [42f](#), [43](#);
fishing ethnographies [37](#), [38f](#); foreshore industrial islets [43–4](#), [45f](#); historiography [55](#),
[58](#); industrial activity [43–4](#), [45f](#); littoral margins [48](#); maritime architecture [45–6](#), [47f](#);
maritime resources [36–7](#); transport of resources [47–8](#)
Membeni [142](#), [143](#)
Menuthias (Menouthias) [106](#), [112](#), [366](#), [419](#); dhow trade [381](#), [382](#); origins of Swahili Age
[138](#), [139](#)
merikani/merekani (American unbleached cloth) [451](#), [452](#), [454](#)
metals and metal-working [107](#), [234](#), [315–16](#), [330](#), [369](#), [619](#); Kilwa Island [256](#), [257](#);
origins of Swahili Age [164](#), [167](#), [173](#), [178–9](#); technological periods [312–15](#); types of
metals/alloys [306–9](#), [310f](#), [311](#), [312f](#)
Mexico [453](#)
Mgao (dialect) [127](#)
Mgoli [232](#)
Mgombani (Kenya) [340](#)
mice [289](#), [345](#)
Mida Creek (Kenya) [44](#)
middens [43–4](#), [166](#), [251](#), [330](#); Chibuene [175](#), [176](#); society and social composition [301](#), [302](#)
Middle Holocene period [24](#), [26](#), [32](#)
Middle Iron Age [xxvii](#), [340–1](#)
Middle Iron-Working [xxviii](#), [312](#), [314](#), [315](#)
Middleton, J. [72](#), [384](#), [529](#), [579](#); coinage and currencies [449](#), [450](#); society and social
composition [294](#), [297](#); stonetowns [590](#), [592](#); town/village relationships [196](#), [197](#), [198](#)
migration [2](#), [4](#), [149](#), [294](#), [366](#), [373](#); origins of Swahili Age [153](#), [158](#); socioeconomic and
political networks [523](#)
mihrabs [492](#), [493f](#), [494](#), [535](#), [617](#); see also [minarets](#); [minbars](#); [mosques](#); [vaulting](#)
miji see [stonetowns](#)
Miji Mitatu confederation (Mombasa) [621](#)
Miji Tisa confederation (Mombasa) [621](#)
Mijikenda people [6](#), [124](#), [198](#), [215](#), [391](#), [522](#); ethnic identification [73](#), [74](#); origins of
Swahili Age [143](#), [149](#); slave trade [572](#)
Mijikenda Union [71](#)
Mikindani (Mtwara) and Southern Coast [139–40](#), [194](#), [201](#); excavations [260](#), [261f](#), [262](#),

[263f](#), [264](#); plant resources [357](#), [358t](#); slave trade [567](#)
millet [141](#), [164](#), [257](#), [262](#), [278](#); dhow trade [378](#), [383](#), [385](#); Pemba Island [234](#), [240](#); plant
resources [352](#), [353](#), [354](#), [356](#), [357](#)
Milot, L. (colonist) [286](#), [289](#)
Milwani (Kirimba Islands) [327](#)
minarets [494–5](#), [534f](#); see also [mihrabs](#); [minbars](#); [mosques](#); [vaulting](#)
minbars [494](#); see also [mihrabs](#); [minarets](#); [mosques](#); [vaulting](#)
Ming dynasty wares (China) [209f](#), [624](#)
Minhāj al-Ṭālibīn (al-Nawwawī) [558](#), [560](#)
Ministry of Lands and Settlement (Kenya) [647](#)
Mir Ali Beg [521](#)
Mirandolé (Pamanzi) [277](#), [279](#)
Mirza, S. [296](#)
missionaries [57](#), [68](#), [148](#), [242](#), [520](#), [625](#)
mitaa (wards): stonetowns [590](#), [596](#), [606](#), [618](#); villages [579](#); Zanzibar [530](#), [538](#)
Mitaayu (Pate) [615f](#), [616](#)
Mitimiru Causeway (Kisongo) [47f](#)
mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA); archaeological (ancient) (aDNA) [82](#), [90](#), [91t](#); modern
[89–90t](#); non-African [88t](#); Y chromosome variation [83f](#), [84–7t](#), [92f](#), [93f](#), [94f](#), [96](#)
mixed languages [124](#), [126](#)
mixed race ethnicity [69](#), [71–3](#), [110](#), [136](#)
'Mji Mkongwe' (Old Town) see [Zanzibar](#)
Mkadini [43](#), [141](#)
Mkia wa Ngombe (Pemba Island) [163](#), [199](#)
Mkiri wa Shirazi (Domoni) [488](#)
Mkokoani Declaration (1945) [572](#)
Mkokotoni (Zanzibar) [141](#), [240](#), [241](#), [248](#)

p.663

Mkomani quarter see [Lamu](#)
Mkukutu (Rufiji Delta) [140](#), [459](#)
Mlongo (Mafia Archipelago) [106](#), [139](#)
modern DNA [82](#), [89–90t](#), [267](#)
Mogadishu [8](#), [19](#), [151](#), [186](#), [295](#), [327](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [372](#), [373](#); houses [505](#);
minarets [495](#); mosques [491](#); system of patronage [643](#)
Mombasa [9](#), [57](#), [198](#), [211](#), [375](#), [648](#); archaeology and history [620–1](#), [622f](#), [623–6](#), [642](#);
built environment [509](#), [637](#), [638](#), [639](#); China [439](#); coinage and currencies [447](#), [453](#),
[454](#); dhow trade [384](#), [385](#); ethnic identification [68](#), [75](#); metals and metal-working [311](#),
[315](#); oral traditions and chronicles [148](#), [150](#), [152](#); siege (1696–8) [594](#); society and social
composition [295](#), [296](#), [301](#); socioeconomic and political networks [517](#), [518](#), [519](#), [520](#),
[521](#), [522](#), [523](#), [525](#); stonetowns [579](#), [598](#); Zanzibar [538](#)

Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) [569–70](#), [573–4](#)
Mombasa tradition (Berg collection) [152](#)
Mombo (Tanzania) [393](#), [394f](#), [397](#)
Monochrome Glazed Wares (MGW) [211](#), [281](#), [423](#), [426](#), [436](#); Gede [224t](#), [227](#), [228](#);
Unguja Ukuu [171](#), [173](#), [178](#)
monsoons [137](#), [351](#); Afro-Eurasian world-system [370–1](#), [375](#); coastal landscape [20](#), [21f](#), [22](#),
[23](#), [24](#); dhow trade [379](#), [383](#)
Monumental Architecture and Archaeology of the Kenya Coast, The (Wilson) [63](#)
monuments: built environment [643–4](#); craft industry and production [646–7](#); early writings
[642–3](#); nostalgia and orientalism [647–8](#); Swahili heritage [644](#), [645f](#), [646](#); transfer of
knowledge [648–9](#); see also [forts](#); [mosques](#); [palaces](#); [tombs](#)
Morrison, Helen [462](#), [463](#)
mortar making [43](#), [44](#)
mortuary and ritual sites [407–8](#)
mosaics [403–5](#), [415](#); coastal/inland relationships [410](#), [411–14t](#); scales of interaction [405–6](#);
Tsavo National Park [406–10](#); see also [inland entanglement](#)
Mosque of Bwana Bakari (Pate) [616–17](#)
Mosque of the Donkey (Mskiti wa Funda/Punda) (Pate) [618](#)
Mosque of Nuru (Pate) [616](#)
Mosque of the Pokomo (Mskiti wa Pokomo) (Pate) [618](#)
Mosque of Three Tribes (Mskiti wa Thelatha Taifa) (Kilindini) [622](#)
mosques [4](#), [8](#), [143](#), [157](#), [186](#), [206](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [368](#), [370](#), [374](#); architectural
style [487–8](#), [489f](#), [490f](#), [491](#), [492f](#), [646–7](#); Chinese ceramics [441](#); Comoros [266](#), [277](#),
[279](#), [280](#), [281](#), [282](#); Gede [220](#), [221](#), [222f](#), [223](#); historiography and [55](#), [57](#), [62](#), [64](#), [65](#);
Kilwa Island/Songo Mnara Island [253](#), [255f](#), [257](#); Kizimkazi (Zanzibar) [489f](#), [492–3](#),
[494](#); Lamu [602](#), [603f](#); Madagascar [287](#); Mafia Archipelago [577](#), [579](#), [582](#); Mikindani
(Mtwara) and Southern Coast [264](#); Mombasa [620](#), [621](#); Mtambwe Mkuu [232](#); Mtwapa
[226](#); ocean fringe [45](#), [46](#); Pate [616](#), [617](#), [618](#); Pemba Island [231](#), [233](#), [234–5](#); Shanga
(Pate Island) [214](#), [216f](#), [217f](#), [297](#); society and social composition [299](#), [300](#), [301](#), [302](#);
town/village relationships [195](#), [196](#), [199](#); Zanzibar [240](#), [241](#), [530](#), [533](#), [534f](#), [535](#); see
also [minarets](#); [minbars](#); [mihlabs](#); [monuments](#); [vaulting](#)
Mount Kasigau (Kenya) [403](#)
Mozambique [37](#), [149](#), [369](#), [390](#); coastal landscape [19](#), [20](#), [28](#), [29](#); origins of Swahili Age [7](#),
[8](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#); socioeconomic and political networks [519](#), [521](#); urbanism [186](#), [188](#); see
also [Chibuene](#)
Mpeketoni (Lamu) [609](#)
Mpiji [311](#), [340](#), [341](#)
MRC see [Mombasa Republican Council](#)
M’ro Dewa (Comoros) [269](#), [273](#), [281](#)
Msangamla Bay [42](#)
Msene (Western Unyamwezi) [451](#)

mshenzi (barbarian) slave identity [570](#)
 Mskiti wa Thelatha Taifa (Mosque of the Three Tribes) (Kilindini) [622](#)
 Mtambwe Mkuu (Pemba Island) [231](#), [232–3](#), [236](#), [449f](#); craft production and industry [327](#), [330](#); metals and metal-working [308](#), [311](#), [312](#)
 MtDNA see [mitochondrial DNA \(mtDNA\)](#)
 mtepe/mitepe (sewn boats) [380f](#), [381](#), [382](#), [385](#), [386](#)
 Mteza [340](#)
 Mtoni (marine terrace) [25](#)
 Mtwapa [161](#), [186](#), [194](#), [198–9](#), [398](#), [423](#); excavations [226f](#), [227–8](#); glazed wares [423](#), [424f](#); South Asia [423](#), [424f](#); see also [Kenya](#)
 Mucanheia, F.U. [126–7](#)
 Mughal Empire [425](#)
 Mugongo area [43](#)
 Muhammed bin Ahmed, Sultan (Pate Island) [214](#)
 Muhammed bin Sulaiman, Sultan (Pate Island) [214](#)
 *mulyango (descent groups) [73–4](#), [75](#), [77n4–5](#)
 mungbean (*Vigna radiata*) [107](#), [109](#)
 Murrapania IV (Mozambique) [390](#)
 museums [59](#), [60](#); national [206](#), [606](#), [624](#), [647](#), [648](#)
 musicians [137](#)
 Muslims see [Arabs and Arabic culture](#); [Islam and Islamic culture](#)
 *mutala (neighbourhoods) [74](#)
 Mutoro, H.W. [187](#)
 Muziris [107](#)
 Mzungullos (mainland people) [623](#)
 Mvinje Island [42](#)
 Mvita [75](#)
 Mwaka Kogwa (bathing in the new year) [582](#)

Mwali (Comoros) [277](#), [281](#), [282](#), [283](#); early history [268](#), [270](#), [272–3](#), [274](#)
 Mwambao ('coast') movement (Kenya) [70–1](#), [569](#), [609](#)
 Mwana Chambi (Zumbura) [151](#)
 Mwana Mkisi, Queen [152](#), [296](#)
 Mwangia phase [140](#)
 Mwani (language) [124](#), [126](#), [127](#)
 Mwenemutapa Empire (Zimbabwe) [307](#)
 Mwenyi Mkuu dynasty (Zanzibar) [530](#)
 Mwiini (dialect) [125](#), [126](#)
 Myanmar [440](#)
 mzinda (ascetic code) [571](#), [572](#)

Nabahani (Nabāhina/ Nabhānī) dynasty (Pate) [98](#), [150](#), [214](#), [523](#), [615](#)
Nabhany, Ahmed Sheikh [71](#)
nails (iron) [315](#), [316](#), [382](#), [386](#)
National Museums of Kenya (NMK) [206](#), [606](#), [624](#), [647](#), [648](#)
nations (taifa) [72](#), [75–6](#)
‘Native Reserves’ [568](#)
Natural History (Pliny) [108](#)
nautilus shell [7](#), [138](#)
Ndzwani people [522](#), [523](#), [524](#), [525](#)
necked jars see [Tana Tradition/Triangular-Incised Ware \(TT/TIW\)](#)
Netherlands [208](#), [211](#), [385](#), [594](#)
nets (fishing) [37](#), [38](#)
New Africa Hotel (Dar as Salaam) [141](#)
New Book of the Tang Dynasty (Zhonghua shuju) [433](#)
New Year [582](#)
Ng’ambo see [Zanzibar](#)
Ngazija (Ngazidja) (Comoros) [268](#), [269](#), [270](#), [273](#), [281–2](#); urbanism [188](#), [189](#)
Ngindo people [545](#)
Ngoni people [541](#), [546](#), [549](#), [551](#)
Nine Tribes (Tissia Taifa) [75](#)
Nkese (Tanzania) [313–14](#)
Nkukutu (Rufiji Delta) [37](#), [313](#)
nomadic pastoralists [81](#)
non-African ancestry [81](#), [96](#), [97–8](#)
non-ferrous metal-working [173](#)
North America [534](#), [594](#), [639](#); merikani/merekani (American unbleached cloth) [451](#), [452](#), [454](#)
North Vietnam [439](#)
Northeast Coastal Bantu (language) [136](#)
Nosy Mangabe [142](#)
Nurse, D. [77n2–3](#), [124](#), [125](#), [126](#), [127](#)
Nyamawi (Comoros) [273](#), [524–5](#)
Nyerere, Julius [569](#)
*nyumba (patrilineal descent) [73](#), [75](#), [77n4–5](#)
Nzwani (Comoros) [194](#), [201–2](#); excavations [268](#), [270](#), [271–2](#), [277](#), [280](#), [282](#)

ocean fringe: craft/construction/industry resources [38–9](#), [40t](#), [41f](#), [42f](#), [43](#); fishing
ethnographies [37](#), [38f](#); foreshore industrial islets [43–4](#), [45f](#); littoral margins [48](#); maritime
architecture [45–6](#), [47f](#); maritime resources [36–7](#); transport of resources [47–8](#)
oceanography [20](#), [21f](#), [22f](#)
Old Dispensary (Zanzibar) [535](#), [536f](#)

Old Fort (Gereza of Stone Town) (Zanzibar) [242](#), [530](#)
Old Sima (Comoros) [488](#); excavations [269](#), [271–2](#), [274](#), [277](#), [280](#), [283](#)
Oliver, Roland [60](#)
Omani period [2](#), [68](#), [135](#), [143](#), [197](#), [368](#); ceramics [187](#); dhow trade [379](#), [386](#); genetic ancestry [98](#), [294](#); historiography [56](#), [57](#); Islam and Islamic culture [558](#), [561](#); Kilwa Island [256](#); Kilwa-Nyasa caravan route [544](#); Lamu [605](#), [608](#); Mgoli [232](#); Mombasa [622](#), [623–9](#); oral traditions and chronicles [147–8](#); origins of Swahili Age [2](#), [5–6](#), [9–10](#), [11](#); Pate [615](#); plant resources [356–7](#); plantation economy [581](#); Portuguese period and [594](#); slave trade [566](#), [567](#), [569](#); socioeconomic and political networks [517](#), [518](#), [521](#), [522](#), [523](#), [525](#), [526](#); South Asia [425](#), [426](#); stonetowns [594](#), [595](#), [596](#); Zanzibar [242](#), [245](#), [294](#), [530](#), [531](#), [539](#), [648](#)
Omani-style houses (beyt) [531](#), [532f](#), [533f](#), [538](#); see also [earthen houses](#); [haweli houses \(India\)](#); [stone houses](#); [Swahili house](#); [timber and daub houses](#)
Omar, Athman Lali [616](#)
Ombo Kisiwani islands [43](#), [44](#)
on-site recovery [64](#)
Opone (Ras Hafun) [138](#)
oral traditions and chronicles [136](#), [147–8](#), [189](#), [299](#), [567](#), [643](#); first chronicles [148–9](#); immigration and foundation of cities [149](#); list of [149–52](#); monuments [642–3](#); narration and meaning [152–4](#); see also [eye-witness accounts](#)
Orientalism [262](#), [232](#), [523](#), [602](#), [647–8](#); colonialism [597](#), [598](#)
Oromo people [198](#), [406](#), [407](#), [410](#), [559](#)
Ottomans [517](#), [521](#), [525](#), [594](#), [623](#)
oxidised wares [142](#)

Palace (Gede) [220](#), [221](#), [222f](#), [502](#), [505](#)
palaces [46](#), [190](#), [211](#), [253](#), [373](#), [531](#); dhow trade [384](#), [385](#); excavations [253](#), [254](#), [256](#), [645](#); historiography [54](#), [55](#), [63](#), [65](#); see also [monuments](#)
palisaded settlements [188](#)
palm leaves [286](#), [300](#), [344](#), [421](#); coastal landscape [30](#), [31](#), [39](#); origins of Swahili Age [110–11](#), [139](#); stone houses [500](#), [509](#), [510](#), [537](#), [539](#), [636](#)
panel tombs [46](#)
Pangani (Tanzania) [10](#), [27](#), [108](#), [149](#), [393](#), [543](#)
Parker Pearson, M. [187](#)
Parkin, D. [73](#)
Pastoral Neolithic (non-Bantu-speaking) [140](#)

Pate Chronicle [148](#), [150](#)
Pate Island [8](#), [68](#), [151](#), [295](#), [558](#), [647](#); historiography [56](#), [61](#), [214](#); socioeconomic and political networks [518](#), [519](#), [521](#), [522](#), [523](#), [524](#), [525](#); subsistence economies [341](#), [343](#);

Swahili identity and place [614](#), [615f](#), [616–19](#); see also [Lamu](#); [Manda](#); [Shanga](#)

patricians see [waungwana/wa-Ungwana](#)

Pauly, Martial [278](#), [467–8](#)

Pawlowicz, M. [73](#), [200](#), [201](#)

Pearce, F.B. [235](#)

pearl millet [109](#)

Pearson, M.N. [307–8](#), [592](#)

Peking University [206](#)

Pemba Island [188](#), [299](#), [311](#), [385](#), [433](#), [520](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [368](#), [369](#); animal husbandry [336](#), [340](#), [341](#); coastal landscape [4](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#), [20](#); coinage and currencies [327](#), [448](#), [449f](#), [453](#); craft production and industry [327](#), [330](#); excavations [231–3](#), [234f](#), [235–6](#), [352](#); houses [510](#); metals and metal-working [308](#), [311](#), [312](#); origins of Swahili Age [106](#), [110](#), [137](#); plant resources [354](#), [358](#); settlement patterns [473](#); slave trade [566](#), [567](#), [571](#); town/village relationships [196](#), [199](#), [202](#); urbanism [163](#); see also [Bandarikuu](#); [Kimimba](#); [Tumbe](#)

Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (Periplus Maris Erythraei (PME)) [6–7](#), [54](#), [60](#), [337](#), [643](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [365](#), [366](#); dhow trade [381](#), [382](#); Indian Ocean trade and communications [105](#), [106](#), [107](#), [108](#), [109](#), [111](#), [112](#); medieval period [37](#), [39](#); metals and metal-working [315](#), [321](#); pre-Swahili coastal settlement [137–40](#); Zanzibar [239–40](#)

Perkins, J. [328](#)

Persian Gulf [7](#), [368](#), [370](#), [474](#), [482](#)

Phillipson, D. [140](#)

phytolith studies [350](#), [351](#), [355](#)

piasters (Mexican coin) [453](#)

Piggott, D.W.I. [151](#)

Pikirayi, I. [358](#)

pillar tombs [374](#), [441](#), [496f](#), [497](#); Mambrui/Malindi [206](#), [210](#), [211](#), [212](#); Pemba Island [233](#), [234f](#)

Pires, Tome [383](#)

Piri Re'is (Turkish admiral) [375](#)

pit latrines [502](#), [503](#), [508](#), [510](#), [618](#)

Planning Lamu: Conservation of an East African Seaport (Pulver and Siravo) [648](#)

plant resources 7: archaeobotanical sources and methods [350–1](#), [358](#); botanical surveys [357](#), [358t](#); China and [432–3](#); colonialism and [356–7](#); first-millennium [351](#), [352t](#), [353f](#), [354](#); urbanism and [354](#), [355f](#), [356](#)

plantation economy [10](#), [506](#), [574](#), [609](#), [640n2](#); slave trade [566](#), [567](#), [638](#); villages [577](#), [579](#), [581](#), [583](#), [584–5](#); see also [agricultural economy](#)

Pliny [108](#), [366](#)

PNEC see [Proto-Northeast Coast \(PNEC\) Bantu](#)

Pointe-au-Sable (Mauritius) [26](#)

Pokomo (language) [74](#), [77n6](#), [124](#), [143](#)

polychrome ceramics [159](#)
porcelain see [Chinese ceramics](#)
porites lutea see [coral](#)
Portal, Gerald [595](#)
ports and harbours [7](#), [24](#), [148](#), [233](#), [384](#), [426](#); Islam and Islamic culture [637](#), [639](#); modern development [604](#), [611](#), [649](#); ocean fringe [36](#), [37](#), [38](#), [43](#), [47](#); socioeconomic and political networks [518](#), [519](#); stonetowns [594](#)
Portuguese period [9](#), [10](#), [68](#), [227](#), [253](#), [315](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [375](#); beads and bead-making [458](#), [464](#), [466](#); dhow trade [381](#), [385](#); genetic ancestry research [98](#); gold [544](#); historiography [54](#), [56–8](#); Kilwa Island [256](#), [258](#); Madagascar [288](#); Mambrui/Malindi (Kenya) [206](#), [208](#), [211](#), [212](#); Mombasa [509](#), [621](#), [622f](#), [623](#); mosques [491](#), [495](#); pass system (ports) [519](#); Pate [617](#); Pemba Island [231](#), [236](#); society and social composition [295](#), [296](#); socioeconomic and political networks [517](#), [519](#), [520](#), [523](#), [525](#), [526](#); stonetowns [593–4](#); town/village relationships [197](#), [198](#); Zanzibar [242–3](#), [245](#), [530](#)
post-colonialism [10](#), [11](#), [59–61](#), [72](#), [81](#)
pottery see [ceramics](#)
Pouwels, R.L. [72](#); oral traditions and chronicles [150](#), [151](#), [152](#); society and social composition [295](#), [296](#), [302](#)
Pradines, S. [222–3](#), [270](#), [271](#), [279](#), [502](#)
Prestholdt, J. [301](#), [315](#), [327](#)
Prins, A.H.J. [70](#), [196–7](#), [294](#)
printing presses [561](#)
protected areas [29–30](#)
Proto-Malagasy [127](#)
Proto-Northeast Coast (PNEC) Bantu [73–4](#), [368](#)
Proto-Sabaki Bantu [74](#)
Proto-Swahili [124](#), [140](#), [141f](#), [142](#), [153](#)
Ptolemy [54](#), [105](#), [240](#), [366](#), [643](#); origins of Swahili Age [138](#), [139](#)
Pujini (Pemba) [9](#), [231](#), [235–6](#), [329f](#)
Pwani Mchumgumli [240](#)

Qādiriyya (Sufism) [559](#), [562](#), [582](#)
Qanbalu [233](#), [463](#); see also [Kanbalu](#)
qingbai ware (China) [436](#), [438f](#), [439](#)
quartz-stone tool-making [408](#)
Qubba Mosque [206](#), [207–8](#)

radiocarbon testing [63](#)
raffia fibre [326](#), [585](#)
Rafiji Ethiopes [138](#)
Raharijaona, S. [189](#)

rainfall distribution and seasons [23](#), [351](#), [353f](#), [368](#)

Ras Hafun [366](#)

Ras Kiberamni [621](#)

Ras Mkumbuu (Pemba) [136](#), [143](#), [488](#), [495](#), [497](#); excavations [231](#), [233](#), [234f](#), [236](#)

Rashid bin Masud (caravan trader) [546–7](#), [548](#), [549](#)

Rātīb al-Ḥaddād (prayer) (al-Ḥaddād) [559](#)

rats [107](#), [111](#), [225](#), [289](#); subsistence economies [341](#), [345](#), [346](#)

Red Sea [370](#), [372](#), [430](#), [462](#)

red-ochre coated and burnished wares [221](#), [232](#)

red-slipped graphite decorated wares [142](#), [143](#), [167](#), [188](#), [370](#), [396](#); Comoros [271](#), [273](#)

regional connectivity see [inland entanglement](#)

resource exploitation [7](#), [21](#), [156](#); craft/construction/industry [38–9](#), [40t](#), [41f](#), [42f](#), [43](#);

maritime resources [36–7](#), [74](#), [139](#); transport of [47–8](#)

Rhapta [6–7](#), [54](#), [60](#), [138–9](#), [366](#), [419](#); dhow trade [382](#), [383](#); Indian Ocean trade and communications [105](#), [107](#), [108](#)

Rhino Valley Rock (Kenya) [407](#)

rhinoceros horn [7](#), [54](#), [156](#), [228](#), [366](#), [643](#); China [430](#), [432](#); mosaics [410](#); origins of

Swahili Age [105](#), [138](#); subsistence economies [345](#), [346](#)

rice [234](#), [302](#), [385](#), [438–9](#), [571](#), [583](#); animal resources and [341](#), [345](#); Comoros [272](#), [278](#);

Madagascar [287](#), [288](#); origins of Swahili Age [107](#), [109](#), [110](#); plant resources [353](#), [355](#), [356](#), [357](#), [358](#)

Riḍā, Rashīd [560](#)

Rift Valley lakes [24](#), [62](#), [140](#)

rihla (travellers' narratives) [562–3](#), [564](#)

ritual practices [296](#), [580](#), [582–3](#), [617](#)

Riyadha Mosque and Islamic school (Lamu) [559](#)

Robertson, James W. [568](#)

Robinson, N.J. [597](#), [598](#)

rock crystal [227](#), [233](#), [282](#), [288](#), [330](#); society and social composition [298](#), [300](#); trade [391](#), [423](#)

Rockel, S. [524–5](#)

Roman Empire see [Graeco-Roman Empires](#)

Round Fort (Fort of Anchorage) (Mombasa) [623](#)

Ruanda [550](#)

Rufiji Delta (Tanzania) [37](#), [313](#), [384](#); coastal landscape [26](#), [27f](#); origins of Swahili Age [138](#), [139](#), [140](#), [459](#)

ruins [61f](#), [62f](#), [66](#)

Rumanyika I, King (Karagwe) [310](#)

rupees (Indian coin) [454–5](#)

ruralism see [villages](#)

Ruvu Bay (Tanzania) [41f](#)

S-shaped utility vessels see [Early Tana Tradition/Triangular-Incised Ware \(ETT/TIW\); Tana Tradition/Triangular-Incised Ware \(TT/TIW\)](#)

Sabaki Bantu (language) [74](#), [77n6](#), [136](#), [142](#), [274](#), [368](#)

Sabaki River [205](#), [223](#)

saffron [353](#)

Saghala (Kenya) [407–8](#)

Saghasa (Kenya) [313](#), [314](#)

Said bin Sultan Al-Said see [Seyyid Sa‘id, Sultan](#)

St Emmanuel Church (Freretown, Mombasa) [626](#)

Sakalava people (Madagascar) [245](#), [267](#)

Sake Cemetery [253](#)

Sakura (marine terrace) [25](#)

Salim, A.I. [72](#)

salt works [39–40](#), [43](#), [228](#), [408](#), [524–5](#)

sand flats (jangwani) [36](#)

sandstone [43–4](#)

Sangarungu Harbour [43](#), [45](#)

Sanje ya Kati (island) [253](#), [436](#), [438](#)

Santo(a) Antonio de Tanna (Portuguese frigate) [9](#), [623](#), [624](#)

SAREC see [Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries](#)

Sasanian-Islamic Ware (Sasano-Islamic) [39](#), [107](#), [240](#), [274](#), [431](#); Bandarikuu [167](#); Manda [159](#); Mombasa [142](#), [624](#); Pate [616](#), [617](#); Tumbe [164](#)

Sassoon, Hamo [621](#), [622](#)

Sasu (gold mine) [307](#)

Satiate people [406](#)

Sauti za Busara (Voices of Wisdom) [599](#)

savanna [30](#), [31](#), [175](#)

Schmidt, Peter [321](#)

Schroda (Limpopo Valley) [179](#)

scrap iron [316](#)

sea salt [39–40](#), [43](#)

sea-faring activities see [maritime trade and activity](#)

sea-level change [19](#), [21](#), [24–5](#), [26f](#), [27f](#)

‘Sealinks’ project [189](#), [273](#), [459](#); ceramics [476](#), [479](#), [482n1](#)

seasonal markets [7](#)

seaweed [37](#)

SEC see [South Equatorial Current](#)

Seesemann, R. [73](#)
Seleman bin Seleman, Sultan [150](#), [154](#)n5–6
semi-diurnal gravitational tides [20](#), [21](#)
semi-precious stone beads [172](#)f
settlement patterns [6](#), [8](#), [24](#), [56](#), [64](#), [110](#); Comoros [271–3](#); ethnic identification [67](#), [71](#), [73–5](#), [77](#)n4–5; pre-Swahili coastal settlements [135](#), [137–40](#); society and social composition [298](#); villages [579](#), [580](#)f, [581](#)f, [584](#); see also [cities and city-states](#); [stonetowns](#); [towns](#); [urbanism](#); [villages](#)
Seyyid Sa'id, Sultan (Said bin Sultan Al-Said) 682, [45](#), [525](#), [531](#), [594](#); Mombasa [623](#), [625](#)
sgraffiato (ceramics) [159](#), [167](#), [178](#), [216](#), [263](#); Comoros [277](#), [281](#), [282](#); Gede [224](#)t; inland entanglement [394](#)f, [395](#); Madagascar [289](#); Mambrui/Malindi (Kenya) [207](#), [210](#), [211](#)
Shādhiliyya-Yashrūtiyya (Sufism) [559](#), [562](#), [582](#)
Shafe'i mosques [534](#), [535](#)

p.667

Shāfi'ī-Sunnism [557](#), [558](#), [560](#), [561](#), [563](#)
Shahu Mvita (Shirazi chief) [152](#)
SHAM see [Société pour l'Archéologie et Histoire de Mayotte](#)
Shanga [8](#), [44](#), [236](#), [310](#), [593](#); beads and bead-making [461–2](#), [465](#); ceramics [474](#), [475–6](#), [477](#), [479](#); China [435](#); coinage and currencies [448](#), [449](#), [450](#); craft production and industry [326](#), [328](#), [330](#); ethnic identification [61](#), [64](#), 742; excavations [214–15](#), [216](#)f, [217](#)f, [218](#), [232](#); iron and iron-working [322](#), [422](#); Manda and [159](#), [161](#); mosques [487–8](#), [489](#), [494](#); origins of Swahili Age [136–7](#), [140](#), [142](#), [143](#); society and social composition [297](#), [298](#), [299](#), [301](#); subsistence economies [341](#), [343](#); tombs [495](#), [496](#), [497](#); urbanism [186](#), [189](#); see also [Lamu](#); [Manda](#); [Pate](#)
Shangani Mosque (Mogadishu) [186](#)
Shangani (Zanzibar) [241](#), [242](#)
Shanidar Cave (Iraq) [308](#)
Shariff, Ibrahim Noor [71](#), [72](#), [77](#)n3
shark [3](#), [343](#), [344](#)f
sheep [343](#)
shell-working [7](#), [21](#), [224](#), [247](#), [271](#), [414](#); Chibuene [175](#), [177](#), [179](#); coinage and currencies [452](#); grinders [323](#), [324](#)f; Indian Ocean trade and communications [106](#), [108](#), [109](#), [110](#), [113](#); inland entanglement [391](#), [395](#), [396](#), [397](#); medieval period [37](#), [38–9](#), [44](#); origins of Swahili Age [138](#), [139](#), [141](#), [142](#); Pemba [164](#), [167](#); Songo Mnara [257](#); subsistence economies [341](#), [345](#), [346](#); Unguja Ukuu [172](#); see also [craft production and industry](#)
shellfish [139](#), [141](#)
Shepherd, G. [180](#)
Sheriff, Abdul [379](#)
Shi'a Muslims [535](#)
shipbuilding [245](#)

shipwrecks [623](#), [624](#)
Shirazi Mosque (Domoni) [272](#), [280](#)
Shirazi people [10](#), [11](#), [256](#), [571](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [371](#), [373](#); Arab and Arabic culture [135–6](#); ethnic identification [69](#), [70](#), [71](#), [72](#), [294](#), [637](#); mosques [272](#), [280](#), [488](#), [489f](#), [490](#); oral traditions and chronicles [149](#), [150](#), [151](#), [152](#), [153](#), [154n2–3](#)
Shore Folk (Comoros) [269–71](#)
Shoreline mosque (Zanzibar) [241](#)
shorelines [22f](#)
Shungwaya [149](#), [154n3](#)
Siku ya Mwaka (ritual) [582](#)
Silk Road [156](#)
silver [311–12](#), [315](#), [419](#), [426](#), [449](#), [454](#)
Sima [143](#), [201](#), [202](#), [270](#)
Sinclair, Paul J.J. [179](#), [269](#), [273](#)
Siraf (Iran) [136](#), [461](#), [474](#), [488](#); ceramics [159](#), [164](#), [167](#), [178](#)
Siravo, F. [648](#)
sisal [584–5](#)
sites see [Bandarikuu](#); [Chibuene](#); [Gede](#); [Kilwa Kisiwani](#); [Kimimba](#); [Mahilaka](#); [Malindi](#), [Mambrui](#), [Manda](#); [Mombasa](#); [Mtwapa](#); [Pate](#); [Shanga](#); [Songo Mnara](#); [Tumbe](#); [Unguja Ukuu](#)
siwa (ceremonial side-blown horn) [236](#)
Siyu Island (Kenya) [151](#), [330](#), [510f](#), [614](#)
skeletal remains [82](#), [210](#), [232](#), [407–8](#)
Slave Catching in the Indian Ocean (Sullivan) [380](#)
Slave Routes Project (UNESCO) [573](#)
slave trade [8](#), [10](#), [208](#), [242](#), [357](#), [566–7](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [366](#), [369](#), [372](#), [373](#), [375](#); built environment [637–8](#), [640n2](#), [646](#); caravan trade [451](#); China [431](#); dhow trade [379–80](#), [382](#), [385](#); ethnic identification [67](#), [68–9](#), [70](#), [72](#), [570–2](#); gender and abolition [572](#); genetic ancestry [97](#); historiography [54–5](#), [57](#), [59](#), [65](#); Indian Ocean trade and communications [111–12](#), [643](#); inland entanglement [390](#), [398](#); Kilwa Island [256](#); Kilwa-Nyasa caravan route [541–7](#), [549](#), [552](#); labour control and landlessness [567–9](#); Lamu [603](#), [605](#), [606](#), [608](#); memorialisation of [572–4](#); Mikindani (Mtwara) and Southern Coast [264](#); Mombasa [625–6](#); mosaics [407](#), [414](#); origins of Swahili Age [142](#), [143](#); Pate [616](#); plantation economy [566](#), [567](#), [581](#); politics and racialisation [569–70](#); society and social composition [294](#), [296](#); socioeconomic and political networks [518](#), [522](#), [524](#); South Asia [424f](#), [426](#); stonetowns [593](#); Zanzibar [531](#), [536](#), [538](#)
smelting see [iron and iron-working](#)
Smith, Lieut. Shergold [454](#)
soapstone goods [171](#), [173](#)
social identity and belonging [602](#), [603f](#), [604f](#), [639](#); contemporary town life and [605f](#), [606–10](#); moral dispossession [610–12](#)

Soci  t   pour l'Arch  ologie et Histoire de Mayotte (SHAM) [278](#)
 society and social composition; archaeological identities [298–300](#); consumption and
 largesse [301](#); cosmopolitanism [301–2](#); ethnographies [293–4](#); histories and [295–6](#);
 permanence and ancestry [300–1](#); pre-1500 society [296–8](#)
 Socotra (island) [19](#)
 Sofala [19](#), [186](#), [307](#), [327](#), [372](#)
 sofi beads [451](#)
 Somali Current [20](#)
 Somalia [29](#), [111](#), [124](#), [142](#), [494](#); early history [7](#), [10](#), [11](#)
 Somana (Nacala) [188](#)
 Song Dynasty (China) [282](#), [432–3](#), [434](#), [438](#), [439](#)
 Song Dynasty Manuscript Compendium, The [433](#)
 Songea see [Kikole](#)
 Songo Mnara [4](#), [46](#), [299](#), [343](#), [355](#), [644](#); beads and bead-making [465](#), [466](#), [467f](#); coinage
 and currencies [448f](#), [449](#), [450](#); conservation [648](#); craft production and industry [322](#),
[328](#), [329](#), [330](#); excavations [253](#), [254](#), [255f](#), [257](#), [258](#); historiography [64](#), [65](#); houses [501](#),
[502](#), [505](#); mosques [491](#); plant resources [355](#), [356](#), [357](#), [358t](#); town/village relationships
[194](#), [200–1](#), [202](#); see also [Kilwa Island](#); [Kilwa Kisiwani](#)
p.668
 sorghum [109](#), [141](#), [180](#), [240](#), [262](#), [454](#); dhow trade [378](#), [383](#), [385](#); subsistence economies
[353](#), [354](#), [355](#), [356](#), [357](#)
 South Asia 781, [288–9](#), [371](#), [397](#), [638–9](#); beads and bead-making [460](#), [462](#), [464](#), [467](#);
 Indian Ocean trade and communications [419](#), [420f](#), [421–3](#), [424f](#), [425–7](#)
 South Equatorial Current (SEC) [20](#)
 Spear, T. [125](#), [153–4](#)
 Speke, John Hanning [310](#)
 spices [594](#)
 spindle whorls [113](#), [200](#), [227](#); craft production and industry [326](#), [327f](#), [330](#); origins of
 Swahili Age [143](#), [160](#), [167](#)
 spirits and spirit possession [572](#), [582–3](#), [586](#), [622](#)
 Sri Lanka [141](#); beads and bead-making [459](#), [460](#), [461](#), [462](#), [468](#), [469](#)
 SSTs see [surface sea temperatures](#)
 Standard Swahili (language) [121](#), [127](#), [136](#)
 Stanley, Henry Morton [310](#), [452](#), [537](#)
 Stigand, C.H. [72](#)
 stockades [408–9](#)
 'stone' buildings [9](#), [69](#), [185](#), [196](#), [209](#), [373](#); Chwaka [234](#); Gede [220](#); origins of Swahili
 Age [143](#), [153](#), [158](#); Ras Mkumbuu [233](#); Shanga (Pate Island) [214–15](#); society and social
 composition [297–8](#), [299](#), [301](#); Zanzibar [242](#)
 stone cutting and masonry [158](#), [340](#), [408](#), [624](#)

stone houses [500](#); [14–15th centuries](#) [501f](#), [502](#), [503f](#), [504f](#), [505f](#), [506](#); [18–19th centuries](#) [506](#), [507f](#), [508f](#), [509](#); Mombasa [621](#); see also [earthen houses](#); [haweli houses \(India\)](#); [Omani-style houses \(beyt\)](#); [Swahili house](#); [timber and daub houses](#)

Stone Town (Zanzibar) [242](#), [589](#)

stonetowns [67](#), [164](#), [207](#), [231](#), [299](#), [329](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [371](#); colonialism and [589](#), [593–6](#), [597](#); conservation/preservation of [597–9](#), [648](#); defining characteristics of [590–2](#); inland entanglement [389](#), [390](#), [397](#); Kilwa Island/Songo Mnara Island [253](#), [254f](#), [255f](#), [256–8](#); Mafia Archipelago [248](#), [579](#); medieval period [40](#), [44](#); Mtwapa [226f](#), [227–8](#); as portals to the past [589–90](#); symbolic/structural approaches to [592–3](#); town/village relationships [194](#), [195](#), [198](#), [199](#), [202](#); see also [cities and city-states](#); [settlement patterns](#); [towns](#); [urbanism](#)

stoneware see [chlorite schist stoneware](#)

Strobel, M. [295–6](#)

‘submerged’ towns [25](#)

subsistence economies [74](#), [173](#), [278–9](#), [321](#); animal resources/plant resources [337](#), [338–9t](#), [340–1](#), [354](#); mosaics [404](#); procurement technologies [344](#); villages [583f](#), [584](#)

Sufism [523](#), [558–60](#), [562](#), [563–4](#), [587](#), [615](#)

Suleiman bin Suleiman, Sultan [150](#)

Sultan bin Saif of Oman, Imam [68](#)

Sultan Said bin Sultan [454](#)

Sungshi (History of the Sung) [371](#)

Sunni Muslims [533](#), [534](#), [620](#)

surface sea temperatures (SSTs) [23](#), [24](#)

Swahili Age [5](#), [17–18](#); archaeological recognition of [61f](#), [62f](#), [63](#); autonomy and subjugation [522–6](#); chronology of [1](#), [2t](#), [6–11](#); classifying/defining [5–6](#), [10–11](#); diversity/plurality of ethnic identity [4](#), [72–3](#); ‘foreign-centric’ idea of origins [152](#); Islam and Islamic culture [143–4](#); maps [xxii](#), [xxiii](#), [xxiv](#); myth of external origins [2–3](#), [590](#); naming of coast and residents [67–8](#); origins debate and ‘Afro-Arab’ culture [135–7](#); pre-Swahili coastal settlements [137–40](#); prehistoric origins [137](#); Proto-Swahili settlements [140](#), [141f](#), [142](#); socioeconomic and political networks [518–22](#)

Swahili Cultural Centre (Mombasa) [648](#)

Swahili History of Pate, A (Werner trans.) [150](#)

Swahili house [591](#), [629–30](#), [640n1–2](#); architectures of contested meanings [636–8](#); coral stone domestic architecture [631](#), [632f](#), [633](#); empire and nation building [638–9](#); ethnic identification [633–4](#); modernity and [630–1](#); politics of exclusion and racial difference [635–6](#); see also [earthen houses](#); [haweli houses \(India\)](#); [Omani-style houses \(beyt\)](#); [stone houses](#); [timber and daub houses](#)

Swahili (journal) [149](#)

Swahili (language) see [language and linguistics](#)

Swahili and Sabaki (Nurse and Hinnebusch) [125](#)

Swahili, The (Horton and Middleton) [297](#)

Swahili Tradition wares (SW) [206](#)

Sweden [137](#), [140](#), [169](#)

Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries (SAREC) [137](#),
[140](#), [269](#), [273](#)

Syria [151](#)

systematic flotation [350](#), [351](#)

Tabora [10](#), [451–2](#)

taifa (tribe/nation) [75–6](#)

Taita people [410](#)

Tamu, Bwana [617](#)

Tana Tradition/Triangular-Incised Ware (TT/TIW) [xxviii](#), [7](#), [62](#), [110](#), [167](#), [370](#);

Chibuene [177](#); Gede [227](#); inland entanglement [391](#), [393](#), [394f](#), [395](#), [397](#); Manda [158–9](#);

Mombasa [621](#); origins of Swahili Age [141f](#), [142](#), [143](#), [206](#), [210](#); Pemba Island [232–3](#);

Shanga (Pate Island) [217–18](#); Unguja Ukuu [170f](#), [171f](#); urbanism [188](#); see also [ceramics](#);

[Early Tana Tradition/Triangular-Incised Ware \(ETT/TIW\)](#)

p.669

Tang Dynasty stoneware [173](#), [274](#)

Tanga (marine terrace) [25](#)

Tanganyika [10](#), [56](#), [58](#), [69](#), [569](#), [584](#)

Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) [569](#)

Tanner, R.E.S. [584–5](#)

TANU see [Tanganyika African National Union](#)

Tanzania [10](#), [11](#), [56](#), [61](#), [188](#), [340](#); caravan trade [543](#); ceramics [322](#); coastal landscape [20](#),
[26](#), [27f](#), [28](#); dhow trade [149](#); ethnic identification [71](#), [73](#), [76n1](#), [639](#); Indian Ocean
trade and communications [107](#), [108](#); inland entanglement [388](#), [390–3](#), [394f](#), [395f](#), [396f](#),
[397f](#), [398](#); Lamu and [603](#); metals and metal-working [306](#), [308](#), [321](#), [312](#), [313–14](#);
mihrabs [493](#); mosques [489](#); origins of Swahili Age [135](#), [139](#), [141f](#); slave trade [566](#), [567](#),
[569](#), [573](#); tombs [497](#); transfer of knowledge [648](#); see also [Kilwa](#); [Kilwa Kisiwani](#); [Songo
Mnara](#)

taro [353](#)

tenrec [270](#), [278](#)

terminology (dating) [xxvii–xxviii](#)

text circulation (Islamic) [560–2](#)

textiles [113](#), [195](#), [302](#), [383](#), [391](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [371](#), [372](#), [373](#), [375](#); coinage
and currency [447](#), [450](#), [451](#), [452](#), [455](#); excavations [326](#), [327f](#), [328](#), [330](#); Gede [227](#), [228](#);
Madagascar [288](#); origins of Swahili Age [143](#), [158](#), [161](#); Pate [619](#); Pemba Island [232](#);
socioeconomic and political networks [518](#), [519](#), [524](#), [525](#); South Asia [419](#), [422–3](#), [425](#),
[426](#); see also [craft production and industry](#)

Thailand [440](#), [460](#), [461](#), [468](#)

thalers (Austrian coins) [453f](#), [454](#)
thatched roofs [9](#)
Thelatha Taifa (Three Tribes) [75](#)
Thenashara Taifa (Mombasa polity) [637](#)
Thorbahn, Frederick [406](#)
timber and daub houses [240](#), [241](#); see also [earthen houses](#); [haweli houses \(India\)](#); [Omani-style houses \(beyt\)](#); [stone houses](#); [Swahili house](#)
Tippu Tip see [Hamed bin Muhammed el Murjebi](#)
Tissia Taifa (Nine Tribes) [75](#)
TIW see [Triangular-Incised Ware \(TIW\)](#)
tobacco [618](#)
Tolmacheva, M. [150](#)
tombs [45](#), [58](#), [143](#), [214](#), [264](#), [487](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [370](#), [374](#); architectural style [495](#), [496f](#), [497](#); Comoros [282](#); Gede [222f](#); genetic ancestry [82](#), [97](#); Pate [615](#), [618](#); Pemba Island [231](#), [232](#), [233](#), [235](#); pillar [206](#), [210](#), [211](#), [212](#); society and social composition [300](#), [301](#); Songo Mnara [257](#); stonetowns [590](#); town/village relationships [195](#), [196](#); see also [monuments](#); [burials](#)
Tong Dian (Chinese chronicle) [212](#)
Tongoni [397](#), [398](#)
Topan, F.M. [72–3](#)
torpedo jars [107](#), [141](#)
tortoise shell [37](#), [138](#), [366](#), [372](#), [382](#), [541](#); Indian Ocean trade and communications [105](#), [106](#), [111](#), [112](#)
tourism [71](#), [577](#), [585](#), [598](#), [647](#), [649](#); Lamu [602](#), [603](#), [606](#), [609–10](#), [611](#)
towns see [stonetowns](#); [urbanism](#)
trade hubs ('emporia') [384–5](#)
trade monopolies [519](#)
trade production [112–14](#)
trading see [domestic trade](#); [foreign trade](#)
'transitional wares' [140](#)
travellers and explorers: written accounts [6–7](#), [8](#), [75](#), [295](#), [306](#); historiography [54](#), [55](#), [58](#); medieval period [37](#), [39](#)
trees see [forestation](#); [mangroves](#)
Trelezani (Comoros) [282](#)
Triangular-Incised Ware see [Tana Tradition/Triangular-Incised Ware \(TT/TIW\)](#)
tropical forest [30](#), [111](#)
Tsavo National Park (Kenya) [406–10](#)
Tsingoni (Comoros) [277](#), [279–80](#)
Tuaca (Mombasa) [621](#), [622](#), [626](#)
Tumbatu [241](#), [493](#)
Tumbe [8](#), [163](#), [299](#), [311](#), [325](#); beads and bead-making [463](#), [469](#); ceramics [476](#), [477](#), [478](#),

[479](#), [481](#); excavations [231](#), [234](#); origins of Swahili Age [141](#), [143](#), [144](#); plant resources [352](#), [356–7](#); shell-working [323](#), [324f](#); textiles [326](#); see also [Bandarikuu](#); [Kimimba](#); [Pemba](#)
 Tungi (Mozambique) [149](#)
 turtles (sea) [54](#), [111](#), [139](#), [270](#), [430](#); environment [7](#), [21](#), [37](#); subsistence economies [337](#), [341](#), [346](#)
 Twelve Tribes (of Mombasa; miji tisa and miji mitatu) [72](#), [148](#)

 Uchaga [315](#)
 Uganda Museum [60](#)
 uhuru sasa (‘freedom now’) [569](#)
 ujamaa agricultural programme (Tanzania) [569](#), [581](#)
 Ujiji [10](#), [451](#)
 Umar b. Ahmad b. Sumayt (Islamic traveller) [563](#)
 Umaasai [315](#)
 umma (Muslim community) [297](#)
 UNESCO see [World Heritage status](#)
 unglazed earthenware ceramics [140](#), [141](#), [159](#), [171](#)
 Unguja Ukuu [xxvii](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [344](#), [366](#); beads and bead-making [172f](#), [458](#), [459](#), [460f](#), [461f](#), [465](#), [468](#), [469](#); ceramics [170f](#), [171f](#), [172f](#); China [433](#), [434](#); coastal landscape [20](#), [26](#), [27](#); excavations [169–70](#), [173–4](#); foreign trade [240](#), [242](#); glazed wares [171](#), [173](#), [178](#); iron and iron-working [330](#); long-distance exchange [472](#), [476](#), [477](#), [479f](#), [480](#), [481f](#), [482](#); mosques [488](#); origins of Swahili Age [139](#), [141](#), [142](#), [143](#), [144](#); ports and harbours [240](#); tourism [582](#); urbanism [188](#), [189](#); see also [Zanzibar](#)

 Ungwana [8](#), [25](#), [63](#), [159](#), [187](#), [314](#); architectural style [494](#), [495](#); houses [505f](#)
 United Nations [599](#)
 University of Dar es Salaam [188](#), [321](#), [392](#)
 University of Ulster [624](#)
 Urban Origins in East Africa project [61](#), [137](#), [169](#), [185](#), [187](#), [189](#)
 urbanism [48–9](#), [153](#), [185–90](#), [590](#), [643](#); animal resources [340](#), [341](#), [342f](#), [343](#), [344f](#), [346](#); coastal landscape [25](#), [36](#); colonial town planning [595–6](#), [639](#), [647](#); craft production and industry [320](#); dhow trade [378](#), [383](#); economies [46](#), [55](#), [81](#), [174](#); emergence of [135](#), [136](#), [143–4](#), [374](#); ethnic identification [69](#), [75](#); ethnographic and historical definitions of towns [196–7](#); inland entanglement [389–90](#), [397](#), [398](#); Kilwa Island/Songo Mnara Island [253](#), [254f](#), [255f](#), [256–8](#); mosaics [405](#), [414](#); plant resources [354](#), [355f](#), [356](#); regional research [198–202](#); society and social composition [293](#), [296–7](#), [299–300](#); South Asia [426](#); town/village relationships [194](#), [195](#), [197–8](#); see also [cities and city-states](#); [settlement patterns](#); [stonetowns](#)
 Urewe ware [6](#), [7](#), [314](#)

Uroa (Zanzibar) [242](#)
ushenzi (savages) [608](#)
usita wa mui ('street of the town') [605](#)
ustaarabu (Arabness) [524](#), [608](#)
uungwana ('civilisation', to refer to people) [523–4](#), [608](#)

VaFerado/VaShiradhi traditions [152](#)
Vansina, J. [149](#)
vaulting [491](#), [492f](#), [497](#); see also [minarets](#); [minbars](#); [mihrabs](#); [mosques](#)
vegetation [29–30](#), [31f](#), [32](#)
Velten, C. [149](#), [151](#)
Vérin, Pierre [186](#), [269](#), [277](#), [286–7](#)
Vernet, T. [198](#), [295](#), [521](#)
Vietnam [440](#)
Vigaeni Mound [44](#)
Vilanculos Bay [19](#)
villages [8](#), [577](#), [578f](#), [579](#); concept of [579](#), [580f](#), [581f](#); ethnic identification [74](#), [77n4–5](#), [581–2](#); ethnographic and historical definitions of [196–7](#); family life [585–7](#); making a living [583f](#), [584–5](#); regional research [198–202](#); religion and ritual [580](#), [582–3](#); urban/rural interconnectivity [194](#), [195–6](#), [197–8](#), [389–90](#); see also [settlement patterns](#)
Villiers, Alan [39](#)
Vumba (dialect) [126](#)
Vumba Kuu Chronicle [151](#)
Vumba Kuu (Kenya) [312f](#), [325](#), [330](#)

wa-Zalia (non-elites) [223](#)
waaf (pious endowment) [560](#), [561](#)
Wabwera people (Mafia Archipelago) [294](#)
WaChangamwe, The [152](#)
Wadiba ('people of the islands') [370](#)
wage labourers [69](#), [70](#)
wageni (guests) [296](#), [605](#), [608](#)
Wahhabism [583](#)
WaHadimu people [582](#)
WaJomvu, The [152](#)
Wak Wak people see [Waq-Waq people](#)
walled towns [195](#), [196](#), [211](#), [215](#), [223](#), [266](#)
Wallerstein, I. [365](#), [542](#)
Walley, C. [585](#)
Walshaw, S.C. [189](#), [326](#), [341](#), [357](#)
Wambisha people [406](#), [407](#)
Wambwera people [581](#)

wamiji (people of the city) [637](#)
wanawake (women) society [296](#)
Wang Daguan [433](#)
WaPokomo people [581](#)
Waq-Waq people [112](#), [179](#), [180](#), [369](#)
Warta people [406](#), [410](#)
waRufiji people [138](#)
WaShanga people [214](#)
washenzi ('barbarians'/savages) [77n2](#), [593](#), [608](#); ethnic identification [68](#), [69](#), [72](#)
WaShirazi [68](#)
WaSwahili [69](#), [70](#), [77n3](#), [75](#)
Waswahili wa Utamaduni Wao (The Swahili and their Culture) (al-Maawy) [71](#)
WaTangana, The [152](#)
water birds [30](#)
water jars/pots [159–60](#)
wattle and daub structures [4](#), [9](#), [156](#), [227](#), [257](#), [325](#), [476](#); urbanism [186](#), [188](#), [189](#)
watu wa bara (upcountry people) [582](#)
WaTumbatu people [582](#)
watumwa (domestic slaves) [296](#), [581](#)
waungwana/wa-Ungwana (patricians/elites) [223](#), [371](#), [422](#), [529](#), [581](#), [616](#); built environment [506](#), [507–8](#), [509](#), [511](#), [639](#); ethnic identification [68](#), [69](#), [70](#), [72](#), [75](#); Islam and Islamic culture [559](#); social identity and belonging [606](#), [607](#), [608](#), [610](#); society and social composition [294](#), [295](#), [296](#), [300](#); stonetowns [590](#), [591](#), [593](#)
Wayamba people [406](#)
wazalia (freed slaves) [296](#)
weather [20](#), [21f](#), [22](#), [23](#), [24](#)
Wenje ware see [Tana Tradition/Triangular-Incised Ware \(TT/TIW\)](#)
wenyeji (original inhabitants) [605](#)
Werner, A. [150](#)
Western Indian Ocean [137](#), [143](#); coastal landscape [21f](#), [22f](#), [23](#), [25](#), [26](#)
Western Unyamwezi [451](#)
Weyuni people [151](#)

p.671

wheat (*Triticum* sp.) [107](#)
wheel-thrown pottery [221](#)
Wheeler, Sir Mortimer [59–61](#)
White, Luise [638](#)
Wilding, Richard [621](#)
Willis, J. [126](#)
Wilson, T.H. [63](#), [187](#), [206](#), [487](#), [616](#); town/village relationships [196](#), [197](#)

wind direction [22–3](#), [378–9](#)

women [69](#), [72](#), [583–4](#), [618](#), [619](#); buildings and [506](#), [507–8](#), [510](#), [511](#), [530–1](#), [591](#); craft production and industry [320](#), [322](#), [325](#), [327–8](#), [585](#); religion and ritual [582](#), [583](#); slave trade [570–1](#), [572](#); social identity and belonging [605](#), [606–7](#); society and social composition [294](#), [295](#), [296](#), [300](#), [302](#)

Wood, Marilee [180](#), [369](#)

wood resources [271](#), [279](#), [300](#), [322](#), [325](#), [354](#); medieval period [36–7](#), [38](#), [39](#), [48](#)

World Heritage status (UNESCO) [529](#), [589](#), [598](#), [603](#); monuments [644](#), [646](#), [647](#), [648](#); Zanzibar [538](#), [539](#)

world systems see [Afro-Eurasian world system](#); [Indian Ocean world system](#)

Wright, H.T. [109](#), [186](#), [201](#), [269](#), [277](#), [467](#)

Wynne-Jones, S. [73](#), [167](#), [247](#), [592](#); craft production and industry [325](#), [328](#); town/village relationships [200](#), [202](#)

Y chromosome variation [83f](#), [84–7t](#), [92f](#), [93f](#), [94f](#), [96](#)

Yaarubi dynasty (Oman) [594](#)

yam [353](#)

Yao traders [524](#), [541](#), [544](#), [545](#), [547](#), [551](#)

Yaqut (Yâqût) (geographer) [8](#), [241](#), [371](#)

Ya'rubi clan (Oman) [9](#)

Yemen [167](#), [282](#), [328](#), [372](#), [494](#), [557](#); Lamu and [605](#), [608](#); oral traditions and chronicles [151](#), [152](#)

Ylvisaker, M. [294](#), [296](#)

Yongle Tong Bao copper coinage [209f](#)

Younger Dryas event [26](#)

Yuan Dynasty stoneware [282](#)

Yue wares (China) [207](#), [435](#), [440](#)

Yumbe (council of ward elders) [519](#)

Yusuf bin Hasan, Sultan [520–1](#), [545](#)

Zambezi River [30](#), [188](#)

Zanj see [Azania](#)

Zanj Revolt/Rebellion (868/9–883) [8](#), [111](#), [240–1](#), [369](#)

Zanzibar [5](#), [7](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#), [644](#); Afro-Eurasian world system [366](#); built environment [240–1](#), [529–31](#), [535](#), [638](#), [640n1](#), [647](#); as capital of commercial empire [531](#), [532f](#), [533f](#), [534f](#), [535](#), [536f](#); ceramics [472](#), [479](#); cloves [531](#), [533](#), [538](#), [585](#); coastal landscape [25](#), [30](#); coinage and currencies [448](#), [449](#), [453](#); colonialism [538f](#), [539](#), [594](#), [595](#), [596](#), [598](#); conservation [648](#); ethnic identification [69](#), [70](#), [71](#), [76n1](#); excavations [239–43](#), [248](#), [337](#); gold [308](#); historiography [56](#), [57](#), [58](#); Indian Ocean world system [106](#), [107](#), [386](#), [543](#); Islam and Islamic culture [558](#), [561](#), [581](#); Kilwa-Nyasa caravan route [544](#); Kizimkazi [240](#), [242](#), [489f](#), [492–3](#), [494](#); map xxiv; mihrabs [493](#); oral traditions and chronicles [150](#); origins of Swahili Age [137](#), [139](#), [141](#), [142](#); slave trade [545](#), [566](#), [567](#), [568](#), [569](#); society

and social composition [294](#), [296](#), [297](#); socioeconomic and political networks [518](#), [522](#), [524](#), [525](#); stonetowns [529](#), [530](#), [531](#), [536–8](#), [537](#), [538f](#), [539](#); town/village relationships [194](#), [195](#), [196](#), [197](#), [577](#); urbanism [188](#); see also ['Mji Mkongwe' \(Old Town\)](#); [Ng'ambo](#); [Unguja Ukuu](#)

Zanzibar chronicles (Kirkman trans.) [151](#)

Zanzibar Revolution (1964) [569](#), [581](#), [648](#)

Zanzibar Stone Town Authority [648](#)

Zanzibari–Inhambane Coastal Mosaic [388–90](#), [397](#)

zebu cattle [111](#), [341](#), [343](#), [345](#), [346](#), [370](#)

Zhao Rugua (Chinese writer) [372](#), [373](#)

Zheng He (explorer) [8](#), [465](#), [468](#); Mambrui/Malindi [208](#), [209](#), [210](#), [212](#)

Zhizo bead series [397](#), [460](#), [462](#), [463](#), [469](#); Chibuene [177](#), [178f](#), [179](#)

Zhonghua shuju (chronicler) [430](#), [433](#)

ziara [582](#)

ZIFF see [Festival of the Dhow Countries](#)

Zimbabwe [65](#), [179](#), [307](#), [468](#)

Zira'at mosque (Comoros) [266](#), [269](#), [272](#), [280](#)

zooarchaeological data [337](#)

Zumbura [151](#)

Zunuj people [151](#)



Taylor & Francis eBooks

Helping you to choose the right eBooks for your Library

Add Routledge titles to your library's digital collection today. Taylor and Francis eBooks contains over 50,000 titles in the Humanities, Social Sciences, Behavioural Sciences, Built Environment and Law.

Choose from a range of subject packages or create your own!

Benefits for you

- » Free MARC records
- » COUNTER-compliant usage statistics
- » Flexible purchase and pricing options
- » All titles DRM-free.

REQUEST YOUR
FREE
INSTITUTIONAL
TRIAL TODAY

Free Trials Available

We offer free trials to qualifying academic, corporate and government customers.

Benefits for your user

- » Off-site, anytime access via Athens or referring URL
- » Print or copy pages or chapters
- » Full content search
- » Bookmark, highlight and annotate text
- » Access to thousands of pages of quality research at the click of a button.

eCollections – Choose from over 30 subject eCollections, including:

Archaeology

Architecture

Asian Studies

Business & Management

Classical Studies

Construction

Creative & Media Arts

Criminology & Criminal Justice

Economics

Education

Energy

Engineering

English Language & Linguistics

Environment & Sustainability

Geography

Health Studies

History

Language Learning

Law

Literature

Media & Communication

Middle East Studies

Music

Philosophy

Planning

Politics

Psychology & Mental Health

Religion

Security

Social Work

Sociology

Sport

Theatre & Performance

Tourism, Hospitality & Events

For more information, pricing enquiries or to order a free trial, please contact your local sales team:
www.tandfebooks.com/page/sales

